CHRIST OR CAESAR

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TO MY SON

HUGH BLACK, JR.

FOR HIS INTEREST IN THE RELATIONSHIP OF

RELIGION AND POLITICS

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PREFACE

I WAS in Italy when the general strike took place in England, and it was interesting to notice the glee with which it was generally received. It was looked on as the break-down of democracy. Again and again men said to me, "That could not happen here." The obvious answer was of course that it could only happen where freedom existed. When the strike was called off and democracy righted itself, there was distinct disappointment. I was impressed by the failure to understand the true nature of democracy, but since then I have been impressed sometimes by our own failure to understand. We have been complacent about the superiority of our system of government, and many think of the appearance of rival systems as if the rest of the world had suddenly gone mad.

In this book, while stating the issue between the free State and the despotic State, I am more concerned that democracy should become

conscious of itself, its strength and weakness. We have paid little thought to the many problems that issue from our democratic interpretation of the nature of the State, though today all our claims are challenged and flatly denied. The philosophy of Herbert Spencer left us with a conception of government that restricted it to the negative duty of preventing one individual from interfering with his neighbour's liberty. If that is all we mean by freedom, it is no wonder it is in danger of being lost. Without the Christian view of such subjects as liberty and tolerance and patriotism, it is hard to see how democracy can function at all, or hold its place against the disciplined efficiency of the servile State.

Theodore Roosevelt said that "the majority of the plain people will day in and day out make fewer mistakes in governing themselves than any smaller class or body of men will make in trying to govern them." We may hold this flattering opinion, but we need to go deeper for anything like a basal faith in modern democracy; for democracy as we mean it today is an utterly new thing in human history, as modern war has completely changed its

character, so that we have to forget almost everything that has been said for or against either. Democracy was cradled and reared in religion, and without religion it will break in pieces. In essence it is a society which is held together by a common faith in the fundamental nature of man, a faith derived absolutely from the Christian religion. This is why I have given this discussion of the doctrine of the State the title of "Christ or Caesar."

Chapter I

THE DOCTRINE OF THE STATE

I

The great modern issue both politically and religiously lies in the doctrine of the State. It was also an ancient issue—it crucified Christ. The issue was drawn quite clearly in the trial before Pilate, when the chief Priests said, "We have no king but Caesar." That was the last word in the trial of strength between Pilate and the Jews, the word which sealed the fate of Jesus. Religious accusations, such as that of blasphemy, with which the enemies of Jesus began, had little weight with a man like Pilate, but he trembled before the political accusation. "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar"—and to speak against Caesar in an autocracy is deadly crime!

It is true that in a sense Christ's claims did not clash with Caesar's. His Kingdom was

not of this world entirely. They were on different levels. During His life He did not compete with Caesar. To His disciples He declared, "The Caesars of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, but ye shall not be so." Earthly empires are external and obtrusive, but He said, "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation. The Kingdom of God is within you." No one could have insisted more strongly on the distinction than He did, though He went to His death because men professed not to see the distinction. At the very end His enemies narrowed the issue down to this—Christ or Caesar.

They were fundamentally right in so drawing the issue. It was, and is, a real alternative, ultimately the only real alternative of life. History has shown how true it was. The cry that Christ raised Himself up against Caesar found its justification again and again. Only a few years after, at Thessalonica, Paul and his little company were dragged to court, and this was the accusation, "These do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another King, one Jesus." All through history ever since in varied forms the self-same issue has emerged.

And once more it comes clean-cut in our world today.

It is customary to describe our modern form of the issue as democracy *versus* dictatorship. Politically that is a true way of stating the case, but it is only a modern variant of the other. Not that Christianity and democracy should be, or can be, equated, as will be shown later, but if democracy is going to have any chance against its rival it must become conscious of where its true strength lies. Democracy has not adequately considered the presuppositions that underlie its claim. Nor has it faced up to the whole group of problems implied in democracy—the nature of the State, the limits of freedom, the extent of tolerance, the claims of patriotism, peace and war, and similar cognate subjects.

In this discussion of the doctrine of the State I use the word not as in international law, which has to do with the relations of separate political entities. For frankly I am avoiding the hair-splitting discussions that arise when we ask, When is a State a State? There are all sorts of States, some incomplete forms, poorly organised, which yet have connection

with the international life of States, such as Abyssinia before its conquest by Italy. And there are paramount States like the British Empire, which has very varied relations, some rather tenuous, with the heterogeneous component parts that make up the whole. I use the word in the common sense as simply the governing authority in the political make-up of society.

There are two preliminary statements to be made. One is that all true ethics, in the sense of moral action, must be founded on doctrine. If not, it becomes mere expediency, or it is at the mercy of emotion. Conduct will veer around without settled course, unless its route is planned. Our moralities are not secure, unless they are based on doctrine. The other is that all doctrine must be judged by its ethics. If not, doctrine can become hard and cruel, unrelated to life. "By their fruits ye shall know them." This is very important in connection with our present subject. If I could not make a convincing case for my side of the issue, I would still claim the right to condemn the other for its results on character and on social life. Without undue simplification the

issue may be stated as between the absolute and the democratic State.

II

The doctrine of the Absolute, or Totalitarian, State is simple, and logical, and tremendously powerful. In a word it is that the Individual exists for the State. His first loyalty therefore is to the State, and no other loyalty of life can compare with it. In certain things—and the State decides on these things—a good patriot gives over his conscience to the State. At all costs the State must exist, therefore nothing else can compare in importance with the survival of the State. The State therefore must be power, above all power. It naturally organises itself for war, and in war the State is the seat of ultimate power and can command anything. It inevitably goes on to the principle that the end justifies the means. That is to say that the State is above ethics. There is nothing higher than the State. Sometimes it appears as a pretentious philosophy, which declares war to be the true test of the vitality of a nation. It bases itself on a pseudo-science

about the survival of the fit. The definitions are all made in terms of the grossest materialism. Force, and efficiency, and a ruthless machine are its watchwords. Fitness to survive is measured by brute strength, and so war is God's test for nations.

This doctrine is immensely effective, and does seem in some respects a noble ideal. It has also so much truth in it; for all of us admit that the nation is of more importance than any member of it. The doctrine is bigger than many others, bigger than some of our slushy democratic theories of rank individualism. It leads to discipline, and to possible unselfish service. Above all, it offers a high purpose, which gives a great motive and ambition to an ordinary common life. This is its immense attraction to masses of men who feel helpless and hopeless, of little or no account in the vast complex life of today. They get swept up into a great movement which gives value and purpose, and makes them feel that they belong to the one great cause.

The doctrine is bigger than all personal, or parochial, or sectional ends. To believe in the State, to feel yourself bound up in its success,

to be willing to sacrifice yourself to its interests, to look upon yourself as an agent for its mighty purposes—all that means a certain uplift and makes life worth while. There is something of missionary zeal in it. In practical life it becomes a kind of religion, and offers the emotional exultation of religion. Millions thrilled to Hitler's cry, "We want no God but Germany." Under certain conditions the same thrill can come to other peoples—Japan, France, the British Empire, and it was an American who thrilled countless of his fellow citizens with "My Country, right or wrong!"

We see at once how useful this is in war. It may be said with certainty that the doctrine at least suits militarism. In preparing for war and in waging war, it makes for efficiency of a ruthless sort. The first and only thing of importance is that, at any cost to the individual, the State should exist and persist. If all the members of the State can be fired with such passionate loyalty, a fighting machine can be created of unsurpassed quality. No wonder the absolute States speak rapturously of their 'suicide brigades.'

The average man in his emotional exultation does not see that it is an abstraction. If he stopped to ask Who, not what, is the State, he might at least see the value of this to the rulers of the State, the man or men at the top. It is the deliberate creation of war mentality in time of peace, but the ultimate purpose of war is never lost sight of. All the capacities for unselfish service and heroic sacrifice, which are the glory of human nature, are exploited by the men who control the State.

The logical issue of the doctrine is world-dominion. For, if the State is the ultimate end and is above ethics, the question arises, Which State? There must be one that is It. That means permeation and control of rival powers, and sooner or later war and conquest. Being a religion the first commandment applies, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

III

There is nothing specially new about this whole situation. Even the attempt at a world-empire is not new. I do not mean merely that personal ambition and national pride have

made conquering armies dream of universal-dominion. But there is a deeper root to it than ambition and pride. Thinkers for centuries, distressed at the miseries of constant war, have made a case for general empire as necessary for human welfare. They have seen the value of peace for man's best life, and have despaired of peace except by the unity of one strong government. Greek thinkers gloried in Alexander's conquests for good and obvious reasons. The Roman Empire was normally and naturally justified for the *Pax Romana.* The poet Dante, looking back longingly to that peace, wrote a book arguing for a secular world-empire, to assure peace and give impartial justice.

Of course Dante argues that this universal-empire must be in the hands of the Roman people. To him, naturally enough, they are the imperial nation. There are German books which duplicate Dante's arguments, with the difference that Germany must do this, and at the end of the day *give* the world peace. Anyone arguing for world-dominion assumes that his own race is designed, and is alone fit, to wield that sovereignty. It is only a step from

that to the doctrine of the super-race, the virtue of the Blood, beside which all other races are degraded and inferior.

Also, there is nothing new about the deification of the State, even the deification of the titular head of the State. Only adoration, never a question or a breath of criticism, must ceaselessly be offered. Our newspapers have recently carried an item that the children of Italy have now a grace before meals when they thank Il Duce for the food which he has provided. An oath of allegiance to Hitler is to be exacted from ministers of the Lutheran Church—not allegiance as citizens, but allegiance as clergymen. At the time of Christ and for long after, the only real god of the Roman world became Divus Caesar. Amid the multitude of gods of their Pantheon the only deity man came to fear was the Emperor. He was worshipped as a god when living, and accepted as a god when dead. There are Roman coins with the inscription to Caesar, "Deo et domino nostro"—to our God and Lord. This worship of the Emperor seems strange to us; for every intelligent Roman knew that a man like Nero was no god, not even much of a man—and

yet it was enforced with cruel rigour. It was not religious in any real sense, but political, and meant practically the deification of the State as man's first loyalty.

There is nothing new in government in the modern absolute State. Sometimes we hear unthinking statements about the wonderful experiments in government being made today in Russia and Germany and Italy. Experiments in some other lines there are, but there is no experiment in *government.* The dictator type is as old as human society. The only real experiment in government today is the experiment of democracy. The one important political experiment being made practically today is the experiment of the so-called British Empire, which is staking its existence on the loyalty and faith of men. The British Empire is united by nothing but the good-will, and sentiment, and common sense of the various parts. For the first time in history an Empire proposes to govern itself without force. Hitherto all Empires have been held and ruled by centralised control. Of course dictators laugh at the idea of an Empire cemented only by a sentiment called "common allegiance to

the crown." It is an unexampled experiment, but an inevitable one for democracy.

There is nothing new in the whole theory which lies back of the modern absolute State. The philosophy of it has been stated and argued many times to justify the practice. No book states the case for it, and works out the logic of it, with such vigour and rigour as Machiavelli's *The Prince*, written four hundred years ago. The implications of the theory of statecraft there advanced are clearly and explicitly stated. It was natural and logical that Machiavelli's next book was on *The Art of War*.

IV

When we turn to the crude Democratic doctrine, we have to confess that it is weak in comparison with its rival of blood and iron. Stated in its naked form it is simply the opposite of the other. It is that the State exists for the Individual. That has often been interpreted to mean as little interference as possible. Our old dictum was that the government which governs least is best. It boiled down to police protection. All we asked of the State was a

free field and no favour. It meant practically that we had no great duty to the State. The result often was that State service was looked on as polite and rather innocent graft. It had the merit of giving easy jobs to some deserving friends. Now, the democratic doctrine that the State exists for the Individual is, we believe, fundamentally true and is the only safe doctrine. It is the only doctrine that can safeguard the rights of man, and the rights of other men. It is the only doctrine that can keep the moral life untainted. We must learn what our doctrine really is, and state it with courage and complete faith, if we believe in democracy.

At the same time the old *laissez-faire* 'go-as-you-please' interpretation is obviously wrong. It is because we had such a narrow unworthy thought of our true doctrine that we have left room for the menace of the rival monstrous one. As a fact we have been jealous of the State, and have narrowed its functions as near as possible down to police protection. Yet for a long time we have been forced by events to criticise our bare bald theory. We were seeing that our principle was leading to an individual-

ism which would end in mob rule. In industry the principle of every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost meant that the devil was taking us all. Plutocracy was getting to be as great a danger to liberty as despotism could be. And so the State was interfering. Indeed, we were calling on it more and more to interfere.

We began to see that the State need not be looked on as an enemy, an alien power curtailing our freedom. We were waking up to see that We are the State. We were seeing that our government is only the agent of the democracy, entrusted by us with certain powers. The State is only ourselves in one of our social activities. When we see that the moral life of man organises itself socially in the State, as it does in the family and the Church, we cease to be either jealous or scared of the State as such. We can decide what the State exists for, and as a democracy we are dead sure that it does not exist for war. War is a tragic stoppage of the real purposes for which the State exists. We are just as dead sure that it exists for us. That is, the State is not an end in itself, but a means. Here the democratic doctrine joins

hands again with the religious. Fundamentally we are right when we say that the State exists for the person. That is the only way of safeguarding ethics both for the single man and for the State.

At the end of the last paragraph I shifted from the word 'individual' to the word 'person.' I did it designedly; for what we really need for our doctrine is an interpretation of the individual. We have surely stopped thinking of men as naked individuals, as if they were single atoms making up a mass. Man as a 'person' is a social and political being, as well as an individual. He never could have become man, nor can he remain man, in isolation. In all our thinking we must remember that the ethical unit is the person, the whole man, in all his interests and with all his relations. It is for the person the State must exist. It is because of this that the State has the right to interfere sometimes even with our personal liberty, in the interests of that true liberty itself—for others and for ourselves.

Because of this, the State has the right and the duty to interfere in industry, to safeguard the person both of the employer and the em-

ployee. There was a time, not so long ago, when a manufacturer could say that he would attend to his own business, and run it in his own way, and allow no interference. But gradually the State has been interfering, has introduced restrictions, regulations, laws about labour, prohibiting child labour, controlling women's labour, insisting on factory inspection and adequate protection in the working of machinery, and so on. Now, this is only a practical question, or a series of practical questions, some of them to be settled by trial and error. But if we work out our democratic ideal as a world of persons, each coming as far as possible to his best and each contributing to the welfare of the whole, we need not fear the result. Democracy will not work by magic. There is no magic in the world. Democracy above all else will not work without intelligence.

The ultimate problem of politics, as of religion, is the reconciliation of liberty with authority. A State is impossible without authority, which here means the subordination of the citizen to the government under law. But with us, democrats, there is no de-

gradation in this. It is willing submission to a constitution which is ours, not imposed on us except by ourselves. If liberty meant that each man could do as he pleases, it would be anarchy. If the official is above the law, it is tyranny. When the ultimate sovereign is the State, our officials become executives, and it is a business proposition, as truly a business proposition as when we say a railroad, or a University, or a city needs executives.

V

In the region of morals as well as of politics, the clear-cut line of cleavage has been drawn in the world today. We ought to take our side rationally and confidently. We, the members of a democratic State, are not dumb-driven cattle to be exploited for an entity called the State. Above all, we do not hand over our conscience to the State. Once more democracy joins hands with religion, when we say in the name of both that there may be a situation where at any cost we must obey God rather than man. In this we are only asserting our democratic principle that the State exists for

the person. We refuse to render to Caesar the things that are God's. If the State does not aid the true moral life of the person and sets itself as above ethics, if it makes itself an end in itself to which we as persons are subordinated, if it deifies itself as brute force, then the soul of man must revolt.

It seems irony at this time of fierce national rivalry and mounting armaments to speak of the ideal of Jesus, springing from His revelation of God, carrying in its bosom the inevitable conclusion of human brotherhood. But the Christian faith gives the whole theory of the absolute State the lie—and must, unless it forgets Calvary. The two ideals come to death-grips. Indeed, this deification of the State, which means the deification of force—whether in the name of Communism or any other—is the Anti-Christ, the complete denial of all for which Jesus lived and for which He died. The deification of the State, denying freedom, overriding conscience, destroying all personal values, is the enemy of man's soul and of the whole Christian ideal. I am no prophet nor prophet's son, but I will predict that all spiritual tyrannies, all government that destroys human

dignity and human liberty, all systems that subject man to the machine, that maim his full personality as son of God, will break themselves on the naked soul of man.

That I admit is only a faith, built on the amazing faith of Jesus. If there was any note more distinctive than another in His teaching and life, it was the worth of the single life. He set it, if need be, over against the whole world. Everything is judged by how it ministers to the full personality, the higher life, the soul. Barbaric militarism, and the rule of force, and the Totalitarian State make no account of this, but it is the essence of the Christian view. Our ideal, if we are Christian, is not the dominance of a race, or a nation, or a class, but a world of free persons making the contribution of their full personality to the world.

But we cannot hold this except on the fundamental Christian position. Only on the sublime faith of Jesus in the infinite worth of the single soul can we find under-pinning for the ideal of democracy. The democracy, which we have called the real experiment in government being made today, is impossible except on a Christian

civilisation. It will be crumpled up and thrown aside by the titanic force that is sweeping the nations of the earth. If it is objected that surely there have been democracies already more or less successful, such as the Athenian democracy, the answer is that there never have been in the modern sense of the word. The Athenian democracy was really an aristocracy, built on a vast slave population. Democracy as understood today, with universal and equal suffrage of men and women without exception and distinction, is a new thing in the world's history. I am justified in calling it an experiment—the one colossal experiment in government being made today. The underlying faith that makes it possible is utterly Christian. So that once again in history the issue can be truly stated as Christ or Caesar.

VI

If we do not see this, it is not the fault of the enemies of democracy, who see it clearly. The Communist regime in Russia saw it from the first, and acted on it ruthlessly. Kurt Ludecke, who was Hitler's Director of Propa-

ganda in the United States, in his book, *I Knew Hitler*, quotes Hitler as saying, "Of course I myself am heathen to the core. . . . The French Revolution, Bolshevism, all of Marxism, in fact our whole deformity and atrophy of spirit and soul would never have come into being except for this oriental mummery, this abominable levelling mania, this cursed universalism of Christianity, which denies racialism, and preaches suicidal tolerance." That sentence sounds authentic. It has the earmarks of the author—his verbosity, his ignorance of history, his type of thinking if you can call it thinking, and his real insight. There is an insight of hate which sometimes sees an issue more clearly than the insight of love.

He sees that the uncompromising enemy of what he aims at is Jesus Christ. He sees that Christianity does level (though he calls it rhetorically an abominable mania), that Christianity stands for universalism (though he calls it cursed), that it denies racialism, and preaches tolerance (which to him is suicidal). He draws the clean-cut issue, which is a great advantage. The enemy is compelling us to make clear our own position. We are forced to assert that we

do accept universalism, we do deny racialism, and we do preach tolerance. We recognise that to do otherwise is to be *heathen to the core.* We have not, we confess, practised these things very well ourselves. We have had a sneaking belief in the inherent superiority of our race, and we have not been always very tolerant.

The issue, which is being historically drawn for us, is forcing us to make our choice, a choice more profound than merely of opinion about government and war. It becomes a choice of adherence of our lives to a fundamental faith. It is the Christian task, and in its measure and in its sphere the democratic programme, to work out this faith in every realm of life—in the family, in our industrial affairs, in our whole social living, and in international relations. For over against the kingdom of force is set the society of brotherhood and service. Over against suspicion, and hatred, and strife are set peace, and love, and good-will. True democracy wants peace among nations, that it may have room and leisure for the immense labour which such a programme involves.

Chapter II

DEMOCRACY AND CHRISTIANITY

I

Democracy in political science means the form of government by which the people rule themselves. This may be done in various ways—directly as in the Greek city-state, or the town meeting of New England. Or, as seems natural in a larger group, it may be by representatives elected by and responsible to the electors. The so-called democracy of a Greek city was really a kind of aristocracy; for it had very rigid restrictions for citizenship and excluded the slave population. With the growth of nations this type of direct government became impossible from mere size. There is a theoretic anarchism, which I imagine might be called a form of democracy. Anarchism as a philosophical theory need not be the terrifying bugbear we usually make it. It would do away with government altogether in the sense of a nation or organised State. It would leave

people to gather into their natural groups, and so govern themselves. Personally I do not think it possible as a practical plan; for there would be little if any cohesion, and it would soon end in not being a community at all. But it is worth mentioning that the driving force of anarchism comes from a protest against the tyranny of the State. That tyranny is growing in every system of government today, and may easily provoke revolt. It is one of the immense problems facing every country in our growing complex social life.

It has to be said at once, and it cannot be said too insistently, that Christianity is not tied up to any political or economic system whatever. Men are called to be Christian in any and every state of society, and they can be Christian in any social order. Obviously, of course, there are forms of government more in sympathy with Christian ideals than others, where it is easier to be Christian. In a poor or evil social system a man cannot become his possible best. And the Christian faith cannot live as it were in a vacuum. It will inevitably work on any system in which it happens to exist, and will affect it. But men can conceiv-

ably be Christian and believe in a monarchy, a republic, an aristocracy, a democracy, a dictatorship, in communism, even in anarchism. Christians like others can be honestly misguided in their political thinking. These forms are only methods of organising social life, none of them sacred and beyond criticism. We must not forget that there are countless Christians in Italy and Germany, who presumably believe for the time at least in dictatorship.

The important thing is that we must never identify Christianity with any system. If Jesus had associated His Gospel with a particular order or a special system, it would have been outmoded long ago, or it would never have got a footing at all. Social life organises itself through stress of circumstances in varied ways, and the ways change with the changing times. If Christianity had been equated with any one of them, it would have passed when that order of life passed. All sorts of systems have tried to get the support of Christianity, and sometimes have succeeded all too well. The Roman Empire did it effectively with dire results on religion, some of which still remain. For hundreds of years the varied monarchies of

Europe sought to make the Church the servant of the State. In Russia the Greek Church was looked on as the tool of the Tsarist regime, and in the Red revolution it shared in the ruin. Whenever we give in to this claim, as the Church did to the Empire, we are false to the eternal truth of Christ's Gospel.

We may think, as I do, that democracy offers an environment suitable for the cultivation of the Christian virtues and for the accomplishment of Christian ends. We may even think that it embodies something of the Christian ideal, and can approximate the Christian spirit. But we must not associate Christianity with democracy, whatever points of sympathy and attraction we find between them. If we do, we are tempted to think of it as the Christian system, when there is no Christian system. We are tempted to think of it as static and final, a social order in which we rest content. There are faults and weaknesses in any form of democracy of which we have knowledge. It may well be the duty of the Church to bear witness against policies approved by the State. The Church must seek to make its members sensitive to what is wrong and unjust

in government policies and social relations. It must work to bring all society nearer to the mind of Christ.

Another reason why we must not identify the faith with our democratic system of government is that democracy today seems to be tied up to the idea of the Nation-State. This may and should change, but the present tendency with its emphasis on nationalism affects every form of government, including the democratic. We think and speak of it always in terms of the nation—French, British, American democracy. However patriotic Christians may be, and are, Christianity transcends all limits of nationality. It has no frontiers, which is one reason why the exaggerated nationalism of dictatorship is its enemy to the death. It oversteps all boundaries of geography, or race, or nation. When the real issues of the soul of man are clarified, I will find that in all essentials of thought and life I am nearer to a Christian German than I am to a pagan American. The Church must never lose the great imperial note of universalism, where Christ is the Saviour of the world. When the Church loses that, it ceases to be Christian.

II

One easy and false solution of the problem is the common assertion that Christianity and politics have no relation to each other at all. It is declared that religion operates in a sphere sacred to itself, and has nothing to say to politics. That may be asserted with some truth of politics in the narrow sense of partisan strife; but if religion has nothing to say about politics in the large sense, it has nothing to say about anything human. The social and political relations of men cannot be dissociated from the deeper relation of man to God, which is religion. If it is, then the highest end for which the State exists is lost sight of, and either the function of the State is permanently weakened, or the State becomes an end in itself, which is idolatry.

To think that we can keep the Christian religion in a closed circle by itself, with no relation to the forces that are moulding life for modern man, is to emasculate religion. At any rate politics will say some things very effectively to religion, if the field is left free to it. Communism spoke drastically to the Greek Church in Russia. Naziism does not lower its

voice in an awed hush to the Lutheran Church in Prussia. Nationalism sets up an idol to be worshipped, and brushes aside the God of the Christians. That means that politics can repudiate the very principles by which Christianity lives, and if Christianity has nothing to say, the case goes by default.

There is a natural temptation for Christians to creep back into the citadel of the soul, and be on the defensive in the face of the titanic forces that today are sweeping the world. There is even a defeatism among groups on the Continent of Europe, where they speak of taking to the catacombs and holding out, as the early Church did under the persecutions of the Roman Empire. Our hearts go out in sympathy with our distressed brethren in their extremity, before the organised terrorism of pagan revival and the bloody bludgeoning of an absolute State. If the worst came to the worst, we would accept the modern equivalent of the catacombs, or like the persecuted Scots Covenanters take to the moors and caves with no refuge but in God. It is changed days, if the Church is to act like a beleaguered garrison holding out grimly till the last defence falls,

instead of the old triumphant mood, when like a mighty army moved the Church of God.

But nineteen hundred years of Christian history have not passed for nothing. This age of blood and iron is not a unique experience to the Church. It has known them before, met, and subdued them. The defeatist tone is the least applicable of any to the Christian believer. "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." We almost speak as if our task were to rescue something of our heritage from the evil force of our age. But Christianity is not a precious treasure, which if possible is to be saved from the rapacity of the world. It is a living force, which has to go out at all costs and *save the world.* There is a Christian interpretation of human life and a Christian world-view, which need to be stated and contended for amid the rival claimants of the day. For, the political problems of our age are in the last issue moral and religious.

III

There is no static or final form of democracy any more than there is of any living organism.

It can exist in many different types of society—in a monarchy for example. For, its essence does not lie, where so many have put it, in a stark equality which leaves no place for leadership. Nor does it mean the faith that the voice of the people is the voice of God, in the sense that the majority is always right. There is sometimes a specious demand in a democracy for what is called a plebiscite, or popular referendum on specific issues such as a declaration of war. That could easily be a 'red herring' for democracy. It is today the method of the dictators. They can get about a hundred per cent. vote for themselves and their policies. Stalin, Hitler, Mussolini and the rest get this vote to endorse their rule whenever they wish. It is a caricature of democracy. It would not be hard for a democratic government to stage-manage a similar demonstration, and work up mass hysteria at a time of excitement to get assent to their policy of war or peace. In a democracy we have a popular referendum going on all the time, in the free growth and untrammelled expression of public opinion. The essence of democracy is that the government is the creation of the people, and above all can be *changed*

by them without violence or revolution. This is the real essence of democracy, that the government can be changed peaceably by the people whenever it ceases to represent the popular will.

Woodrow Wilson in a pregnant paragraph said: "Democracy is a growth not an invention, a life not a machine, an effect not a cause. It is a stage of development. It comes like manhood as the fruit of youth. Immature people cannot have it. Democracy is conduct, and its only stable foundation is character. America is not free because she is a democracy —she has democracy because she is free." We are inclined to think that when a country takes over certain democratic institutions all is then well. When Italy modelled her government on the British—a constitutional monarchy with Parliament—all British people thought that Italy was now a democracy of the right brand, and nothing more was needed but to wish her well. When Germany became a republic, every American metaphorically threw his hat in the air, and assumed that everything was now all right and the world had been made safe for democracy. We forgot what a long, arduous story lay back of English-speaking

democracy from the Magna Charta and Bill of Rights with many struggles and crises—and we are not terribly proud of the lumbering way we work it even after all the centuries of learning. Democracy is not a magical system that will cure all political ills, if only its institutions are introduced. No system is better than the men who work it—indeed it is not as good—for every system hardens and holds its very defects as sacred.

The glory of democracy is that it carries in itself the cure for its defects. Its method is pretty well summed up in Walter Bagehot's phrase as "government by discussion." At bottom it believes that men can settle disputes and differences by argument and reason. In an age of blood and iron it is easy to make fun of this as trusting to talk for security instead of the strong arm. But it displays faith in men, and faith in the rationality of the world, which ultimately means faith in God. That is why it has its roots in religious faith. Only on such a deep foundation have we the right to expect that human society can be governed by discussion and persuasion.

We seek even to carry the method into inter-

national relations. What is this urge in man that forces him in spite of all defeats to contend for something higher? It is easy to sneer at the conferences which take place ever and anon about limitation of armaments and the various attempts to organise peace. It is easy to call them hypocrisy and sham—and we cannot deny that they seem doomed to fail. Yet what may be called the Conference idea is never killed outright. It keeps surviving, and trying again. Why? Because the aspiration for a better international life than the reign of brute force has been born in men's hearts. The ideal is inextinguishable. The believers in brute force even are compelled to attend some of the conferences. In spite of their bluff and bluster, there is a moral unease in their attitude. It looks as if they feared that one day they would be really outlawed, and already they have an uneasy feeling that they are outlaws. Is the life of man for ever to be governed by force, by the law of the jungle? Or may it one day be ruled by reason, by moral law? In spite of the sneers of the cynics, and in spite of the repeated failures and disappointments, man's yearning for a nobler life persists.

IV

It is too much to say that democracies could not be war-like, and are necessarily pacific. It is conceivable that a democracy could even be the aggressor in a war, might be swept by mob hysteria into breaking the peace. But democracy in theory and in practice tends towards the abandonment of war as the normal method of settling disputes between nations. In essential nature it makes for discussion and arbitration, rather than the appeal to arms. America and Great Britain, for example, have settled by arbitration all sorts of questions which formerly were the occasion of war, disputes about boundaries, fishery rights, commercial claims, damages caused by war, and such like inflammable questions. Because of this willingness to discuss and arbitrate, both Great Britain and the United States have had standing armies of negligible size compared to their population and their status in the world of nations.

Obviously, democracy is the poorest system of government either to prepare for war, or to wage war. It is true that the spirit of a free people will in the long run even in war triumph

over the spirit of serfs however well disciplined; but it is often such a long run, and sometimes time is not allowed for it. The Macedonian phalanxes crushed out the light of Athens, though her greatest orator, Demosthenes, broke his heart trying to warn her of the impending doom. An American orator, speaking unlike Demosthenes against military preparedness, declared that if need arose a million men overnight would spring to arms. That might be true in days when the only arms needed were a pike or a sword, but a million men might spring, and find it took years to provide modern arms. Besides, it takes more than the right spirit to turn a mob into an army. Gibbon says, "So sensible were the Romans of the imperfection of valour without skill and practice that in their language the name of an army was borrowed from the word which signified exercise" (*exercitus ut exercitando*).

This is one of the natural reasons why democracy is against war. For the time being in a state of war it almost ceases to be democracy. War always strengthens the organisation of government and the power of the State. In the strain of war the need for centralisation of

power arises, with authority to use the resources of the nation to the limit. The citizens are compelled, willingly or unwillingly, to give up liberties they cherish, and accept for the time what are practically forms of dictatorship. The idea that the power of the State may be, and should be, limited is a new one, and belongs to a democracy. In war the State takes back much of the power which the democratic process had deprived it of. It is a blight on our thinking today that we are forced to think almost exclusively of international relations in face of the dread menace of war. Democracy has so many better things to think of and so much to do to develop itself in line with its ideal, that it is an offence to it to be distracted from its true ends.

No wise observer can think that the working out of real democracy is going to be easy. Probably we are entering one of the most difficult and unsettled eras in history. Economic readjustment will spell economic hardship for countless people. We realise how easily there may be class conflict so bitter that it may even become class war. And there can be no war so devastating and blighting as class war, leav-

ing a trail of bitterness and hatred. Democracy had better make an ally of religion to save itself, and save us all from destruction. If true to its best principles, democracy like religion must renounce violence as means to its ends. Like religion too it must depend on education, and persuasion, and the growth and permeation of ideals. Believers in democracy belie their cause and deny their principles, when they forsake the patient cultivation of public opinion and resort to force.

V

In spite of the menace of force from without, the great dangers to democracy are from within. One is from selfish individualism. The very freedom, which is the air it breathes, makes possible anti-social acts, which if unchecked will destroy freedom itself. When self is the first dog in the hunt, life becomes a scramble without dignity and pretty soon without security. Rampant selfishness will break down any social union. Dictatorship, which curbs individualism with a high hand and reduces or eliminates opportunities for prey-

ing on the body politic, will easily win the day against a system which offers an open sphere for greedy exploitation. If all that democracy gives is a free field for a free fight, it deserves its inevitable fate of defeat before a system which enshrines discipline and unselfish service as its watchwords. Selfishness will rot out the heart of democracy, and in the hour of stress it will fall to pieces.

Another danger of democracy is class strife. In the immense complexity of modern life with developing industrialism men naturally form themselves into classes more or less organised. There is bound to be clash of interests, and occasions arise when excitement boils up into passion. There is always a temptation to take short-cuts to achieve good ends, to reject the democratic method as too slow and uncertain, to resort to violence. That is to take a leaf out of the dictator's book, and to betray democracy itself.

Another danger, due to the irritating slowness of the democratic process, is that people may welcome some form of Fascism in order to get what they think is progress and security. Historically dictatorship does not arise, and is

not accepted by a people, as bare despotism. It is usually and honestly thought to be the safeguard, not the denial, of liberty and other things they value. This was so in France, when Napoleon used the normal revolt of Frenchmen against the shocking inefficiency of the revolutionary government.

Democratic forms can exist long after they are emptied of meaning, and all astute dictators keep the forms for years. Caesar Augustus was very careful to preserve all the republican institutions of Rome, while depriving them of real power. Napoleon kept the forms of the democracy of France. For long he let a Parliament survive, but only as his mouthpiece and sounding-board. He had plebiscites now and again to give him the popular sanction for what he had ordained. When he was ready to attack a country by force of arms, he had his agents create disaffection within its borders, and begin popular movements to justify his invasion in the interests of 'justice' and civil order. He produced a feeling within France that she had been wronged and made poor by the other nations. Russia, Austria, and Prussia had dismembered Poland and divided the loot among

themselves, and France was left out in the cold. He created a sincere enough popular feeling of injustice, so that when he went out to redress their wrongs he had the nation back of him. I need not show point by point how Hitler has followed suit, and imitated the tactics of Napoleon.

Nor need I enforce the moral and give the warning that a democracy can be emptied of all meaning while all the forms remain. We should be jealous of all undue authority, and of any tampering with free institutions. For example, all decent citizens are sometimes annoyed by a freedom of the press which seems to amount to licence, and are in a mood to agree to stricter censorship. But in spite of such occasional feeling, we should resist every attempt to curb the liberty of the printed word. Personally we may be more interested in the freedom of the citizen than of the press, but in the long run the one depends on the other. The whole idea of democratic liberty is of a piece, and to lose freedom anywhere is to risk losing it everywhere. Of course it is galling to a government to be subjected to the criticism of a free press, especially when it feels that to be unjust or purely partisan. It would like to

be rid of the vigilant opposition of unfriendly critics. But opposition is necessary for a democracy, which works by enlightened public opinion. And the very essence of democracy is that a government can be freely changed, when it loses popular support. There is a fine old usage in the British House of Commons, where they speak of His Majesty's Government and His Majesty's Opposition. It is assumed that the one plays as useful and necessary a part as the other.

Above all, we should insist on honest and efficient government. The basal cause of dictatorship always lies in genuine popular disgust with the corrupt or ineffective rule which is the curse of democracy. The old republican forms of Rome had grown inept and could not properly govern the growing Empire, and Augustus had the support of the popular will when he gave them real energetic administration. A nation feels weak, with its energies scattered, and with no national purpose to unite it and command the spirit of the people. So that in a crisis it is glad to have the strong centralised rule even of a dictator, who always begins as a national hero not as a despot.

VI

Also, we might learn from the real strength of the opposing system, which lives by what is true and strong in it, not by what is false and weak. We might learn from its discipline, the subordination of the individual to the good of the whole. Democracy does not need to be an undisciplined mob. We might learn from the opportunity given for unselfish service of the community. Democracy schooled by religion can really do that better than its rival; for it would be the free offer of our lives to social ends. We might learn from what is the secret of the greatest strength of dictatorship—the adherence to a great purpose, which can dignify common men and lift them in the sweep of a passionate attachment. In our vast impersonal industrialism so many lives are drab, and empty, and so many men feel frustrated, that they are the easy victims of a mass movement, which calls for their allegiance and makes them feel that their share in it is of value. Why should not the high ideal of democracy command us, and give us a finer thrill than the far lower ideal of Fascism can give?

We must learn, too, the place and significance of leadership. The free State demands leadership as truly as the servile State, but it is difficult to get it of the quality sometimes desperately needed. In the servile State the leadership is imposed on the people; in the free State it is chosen by the people. Democracy must seek ways of assuring the supply of true leaders. The service of the State should be looked upon as the highest honour possible to the citizen. The men we choose should know that we trust them and ask from them their best. The men to whom we give the arduous task of government, who devote their lives to politics, should get from us loyal support and generous judgment. Fair and honest criticism they should expect and welcome, but in all the democracies I know there is too much personal abuse and partisan obstruction. If we want leadership of faith and character, we must devise ways of getting it, and must be worthy of it by our ungrudging and faithful support. There can be no great leaders without loyal and devoted followers.

Let us not deceive ourselves, and imagine that a system must survive by its inherent

superiority. It depends on what the system does. Over against sheer individualism with its implied creed of every man for himself like hogs among the swill, the absolute State is a preferable alternative. It at least gives cohesion to society, and offers a worthier ideal than a free scramble of greed and selfishness. But true democracy means the opposite of that, though sometimes it has been depraved to be something like that. It means an order of life, a social bond which self-respecting men can freely accept and gladly use for the good of all. By itself it is only a method of government open to be improved and perfected, and when it is inspired by the Christian ideal it can serve the highest ends of man's life.

Only religion can provide the adequate protection against all the dangers that menace democracy from within. It can curb the selfish ways and means that disintegrate social life. It can release the higher altruistic qualities that are native to man. It can set us to ever enlarging purposes. It can provide the dynamic and the goal for social reconstruction. And it can give the support of a great society, which the single man needs badly to save him from losing

heart in such a cause. He gets the sense of union with all like-minded men of good-will. He is not a single soul battling valorously and alone, but a member of the great society which may fondly be called the Communion of the Saints.

When we assert that our democratic institutions make a fit environment for Christian life and effort, it does not mean that we think them exclusively Christian, nor that we deny the right of other peoples to develop their political life as they choose. Nor does it mean that we should seek to impose our form of government on others. It would be a calamity to make international life an arena of warring systems in the name of religion. We have to keep insisting that Christianity is not democracy. It is not the task of the Church to make the world safe for democratic government. The task of the Church will not be ended till the kingdoms of the world become the Kingdom of God and of His Christ. Our God is not a tribal deity, but the God of the whole earth.

Chapter III

THE BASAL FAITH OF DEMOCRACY

I

We may trace Democracy back to history, to a long story of political movements and struggles for larger and wider liberty. It is a growth, not a ready-made system superimposed on a people. We may thus get historical explanation of the forms it has taken and the institutions it has produced in any particular country. When Woodrow Wilson said that immature peoples cannot have it, he meant that it was the result of a process, by which men were trained to work it. It is well to bear this in mind to give us courage for our share in the process, and to give us patience with peoples who have only begun and seem to have failed. We have an unthinking optimism at times, as if there were something magical about a system. When China became a republic almost overnight, we talked as if her troubles were over. She now was of the true faith, and

could move serenely towards the great democratic ends. But there is no security of that sort for any formal system or order of life. The mere fact that men have struggled for it and have reached some measure of it is no guarantee that it can be preserved. It can only be saved by the living faith which produced it.

We hold nothing by prescribed right. We sometimes seem to imagine that men have some mysterious abstract rights inherited by nature, such as the right to freedom, which will be treated in a later chapter. Freedom, however, it may be said here, is not a gift of nature, but an achievement to be won, and often is easier won than kept. It can be lost, if the conditions that make it possible disappear. The chief of these conditions lies deep in the region of faith. All our so-called rights are the fruit of a vital faith. They spring from faith in the nature of man and the nature of the world. In analysing the basal faith of democracy we are dealing not with its political machinery, which is ever imperfect and differs in different situations and is always in need of repair, but with its fundamental elements.

For one thing, we must believe in democracy to some extent for its own sake. By that I mean that democracy is not merely a system for producing desirable things for men—it is one of the desirable things itself. As a matter of fact it is not the best system imaginable for producing things and getting useful things done. It is tiresomely inefficient and clumsy as a machine. We have to believe that the democratic process has value in itself, apart from the useful things it creates for the community. It is part of the democratic faith that it may be better not to have some things at all, than to have them at the cost of destroying or weakening the democratic process. For example, certain good economic changes might be dearly bought, if by the method of getting them character was deteriorated or freedom lost.

This faith that there is virtue in the method itself is only of a secondary sort, and depends on what we here call the basal faith of democracy. The democratic tradition is living subconsciously on the underlying faith of Christianity. The first necessity of today is to bring this out into consciousness, and act on

it courageously. That underlying faith is twofold, the Christian view of man—man's worth and man's destiny—and the Christian view of the world. The two are vitally related; for the Christian view of man cannot hold, unless the actual world is the kind of world where that view of man is possible. If it is only a dreamer's sentimental thought of human nature, unrelated to fact with no foundation on reality, it will wither and fall before the rude blast of actual truth.

II

In the first place, democracy rests on a doctrine of man, which is derived from the Christian assertion that he is a spiritual personality. He must be treated not as a means but as an end. This is the only ground for his claims to certain rights, such as freedom, justice, equality before the law. The real question at issue is the nature and destiny of man. Deep down below the practical controversy between rival systems of government lie religious presuppositions. If man is only the product of material processes, whether the efflorescence of organic scum that somehow

gathered on the surface of this planet, or later the result of the grinding out of economic forces, then the high claim of democracy and the higher claim of religion for him is absurd. If man is a living soul, a spiritual personality, he may not be treated merely as a means even by the all-powerful State.

The doctrine of the absolute State, which demands complete subservience, which disposes of men's lives as really worthless in themselves, is based on a theory of human life radically opposed to Christianity. In Chapter 17 of Mussolini's authorised biography by Margherita G. Sarfatti there is Mussolini's 'Thesis on Machiavelli,' in which he says, "I affirm that the doctrine of Machiavelli is more living today than it was four centuries ago. . . . What does Machiavelli think of men? Like all those, who have had occasion to hold continuous and wide converse with his fellows, Machiavelli is a scorner of men, and loves to present them in their negative and mortifying aspect." After quoting many of Machiavelli's derogatory views of human nature, including his judgment that "men have less respect to offer to a man who makes himself loved than

to one who makes himself feared," Mussolini concludes, "Much has passed since then, but if I were allowed to judge my fellows and compatriots, I could not attenuate in the least Machiavelli's verdict. I might even wish to go further than he." He quotes with approval what Machiavelli wrote in *The Prince* (Chap. 6), "From which it comes about that all armed prophets conquer, and the unarmed are lost. Because the nature of the people is variable, it is easy to convince them of a thing, but difficult to maintain them in that conviction. And therefore it is desirable so to order things that when they have ceased to believe, it may be possible to make them believe by force." This is the antithesis of all for which democracy stands, and is the negation of Christianity.

There is one obvious remark to be made about the contemners of human nature, that they always speak as if they themselves belonged to a different species. Mussolini, when he would go further than Machiavelli in his disparaging judgment on men, suggests by his tone that he himself is of another and higher order. An eager supporter of the then popular doctrine of Illuminism spoke enthusiastically to

Frederick the Great of what education would do, if we accepted the assumption of the goodness of the human race. Frederick said grimly, "You do not know the race." It implied that he of course knew, and somehow did not himself belong. If men are so hopeless, how can any man imagine that he is so wise and good that the whole colossal power of the State should be entrusted to one of a breed so low?

This really suggests a quandary. If the State is supreme, beyond criticism, above law, the one and only end for man's loyalty, what guarantee have we for the character of the men who govern and dictate in the name of the State? They may be benevolent despots, sincerely trying to administer their vast estate as honest trustees. They may just as easily be bloody tyrants, who have usurped power and use it for selfish ends. They may even begin rule with noble and beneficent purpose, and be corrupted, as often has happened, by unrestrained power. No men are good enough to command such authority, and no idol they set up can be worthy of the worship of free men.

III

The issue of our day is compelling us to ask what is our real faith regarding man. The supreme issue is not economic or political, but between two opposing interpretations of human nature and human life. If man is only the product of material forces, then the forces that produced him can use him, and destroy him at will. When we say that man is more than the product of biological or economic processes, it does not mean that these processes are unimportant. They are tremendously important. The economic environment affects and controls life at almost every point. We merely mean that all of man, as we know him in history and experience, is not explained by these processes.

Democracy has been living on the Christian heritage, unconsciously using the status given to man by the Christian faith. If it is to hold its own in the clash of rival systems, it must become conscious of its implicit faith. For the real menace is as usual from within rather than from without. All the armaments of barbaric militarism cannot finally crush it, if it is true

to itself and knows where its strength lies. But all the armaments it may pile up in its own defence cannot save it, if the soul filters out of it. It may win battles and campaigns, and end up really in the enemy's camp. Democracy simply will not work as a system without the moral and religious qualities to which it owes its existence. At our best so far, it has worked haltingly enough, because we have thought of it as a machine, and have thought little of the dynamic that alone can adequately drive it.

It may be objected that we can have a high view of man, sufficient for the working of democracy, on humanitarian grounds without a specific religious faith. But can we? We got it from spiritual religion, and can we keep it, if we lose all thought of its origin? Reverence for human life, respect for human rights, regard for human dignity, belief in human freedom are all of our Christian tradition, and when the roots of that are cut, how long will it be before they wither? Where can we find sanctions for the programme to which democracy should be committed—social justice, brotherhood, good-will among men, peace among nations? How can freedom be safe-

guarded, and what guarantee is there for the values we have learned to put on personality and on the finest qualities of humanity? They are founded on Christianity, and stand or fall with it. How long will all humanitarian schemes last, when the inner resources are dried up?

To hold the Christian view of man does not imply that we shut our eyes to the facts on the other side, the folly and weakness and baseness of human nature. It is easy to make a case that at best he is only a superior animal—and not so superior at that. Shakespeare in *King Lear* uses the beasts to describe man, "Hog in sloth, fox in stealth, wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey." The Christian view does not make him an angel with wings about to sprout. St. Paul had no illusions as to what men can be, as his first Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans shows. His description bites with mordant epithets—reprobate, covetous, malicious; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; back-biters, insolent, boastful, covenant-breakers, merciless, without natural affection, given up in the lusts of their hearts to uncleanness. These are not

the words of a sentimentalist, who thinks softly of men as only immature angels. As a judgment it is far more effective than Swift's bitter rage against men as noxious vermin.

What distinguishes St. Paul from mere satirists is that he knows that men *can be redeemed.* To him they were "beloved of God, called to be saints." They were not only capable of heroic human virtues, but could even receive "the power to become the sons of God" and become inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven. This is more than a calculation in arithmetic, setting man's latent nobility against his patent swinishness, counting his possible virtues over against his vices, striking a balance, and perhaps concluding that after all he is not such a bad creature. The root of the Christian optimism is that man in essence is a spiritual personality, able to enter into a relation with the eternal, and even live in the power of endless life.

If this be man, certain conclusions follow. The person as such becomes inviolable and sacred. To treat men as cannon-fodder for the might and glory of the State, or as grist for the mill of industry, is sacrilege. Man possesses rights, of which it becomes heinous sin to de-

prive him—the right of moral freedom, the right to realise himself as a person. When this Christian faith in man is lost, room is easily made for superstitions and myths like that of the pure race and the super-race which are only 'delusions of grandeur,' to compensate frustrated man in his desire to be something. If democracy loses this faith, it has no reason for its existence, and no security for its permanence.

Democracy presupposes a view of man which gives each individual worth. Its dominant rival today denies this in effect, and asserts that his worth lies solely in his absorption in the State. In dictatorships men are only fit to be governed, controlled, regimented, *used*. They are not ends in themselves, but means. Democracy assumes that they are fit for freedom. This is a Christian heritage, and will be lost if its ground is removed. Democracy grants the claim of equality—equal rights and equal share of responsibility. It all runs back to the Christian doctrine of man, and if this is false, the claims made for him by democracy are as futile as the dictators assert in their rather turgid oratory.

IV

The Christian doctrine of man cannot stand alone. It derives absolutely from, and depends utterly on, the Christian doctrine of God. The Christian view of man is only part of the Christian world-view. There could be no such valid belief in men, without belief in a rational universe. If this be a world in which things merely happen, unplanned, unwilled, with no purpose or goal, there is no room for praise or blame, and even effort is unavailing; for there is no meaning to anything for man. Faith in God and faith in man's possibilities are inseparable. Our real hope for a new age of brotherhood and justice and peace is based not on man's innate capacity to achieve that, but on his redemption as a son of God, who thus can fulfil the ideals of the Kingdom of God.

A religion is to be judged and valued, not by what it has to say about the origin and end of all things, or even about man's life and conduct, but by what it has to say about God. For that settles the whole constitution of man's world, his nature and destiny. It gives him,

or deprives him of, a solid footing for his hopes and aspirations. The moral confusion of our time comes from lack of a real foundation for rational life; and the common idolatries of today—the worship of the State, worship of force—are in essence the denial of the Christian God. Every really great human controversy has to be fought out in the region of presuppositions, in the final faiths of mankind. The real issue today is colossal, far more fundamental than the bickerings and enmities of nations, or the menace of class strife. It is whether we are in a world where the idealism of man's soul has its natural home, or in a world that cares nothing for man's hopes, or fears, or aspirations, or prayers.

Communism and Fascism oppose each other as the alternatives for man's choice, and speak as if they were mortal and eternal enemies. They seem to think that they are fighting out the deep issue for the soul of man. But really they are not enemies, except on the surface. They are "sisters under the skin." There are bitter personal enmities between them, and some political necessity to create rival camps to justify the absolute control of their nations.

But they stand for the same thing and hold the same creed, in deadly opposition to Christianity and almost as deadly opposition to democracy. Hitler says he is heathen to the core, but he is no more heathen than Stalin. It seems a shame to use a word like Pagan to describe them; for pagans were desperately religious and peopled the whole world with divine manifestations. The new paganism in essence means the denial of God, the denial of the spiritual world where the great words of man's soul—truth, and freedom, and justice, and love, and mercy—have their eternal roots. It means that there is nothing higher than man, and the State which he creates is the only God there is.

The real line of cleavage is drawn between this paganism and Christianity, and in this struggle there can be no neutrality. All that we have meant by civilisation, its humane culture, freedom, justice, the growth of international law, stand or fall with the Christian cause. The claim of the State to command exclusive allegiance, acknowledging no law but its own fiat, must be rejected by religious man at any and every cost. We refuse to bow the

knee to Baal, and give the worship of heart and life to a false god. If the State is overlord, stifling the personal conscience, coercing the will, then comes a full stop to the age-old travail of man's soul and the long passion of the saints. But if God is above Caesar, with a holy law above will of man or edict of State, then man can come to his own again and save his soul alive. On no other terms is there a secure place for the great experiment of democracy.

So normally and inevitably religious is man, ever reaching out in age-long search for God, that the new exaggerated nationalisms are buttressing themselves with faith in gods which we had thought belonged only to primitive man. There are weird resurrections of paganism—cults of blood and soil, worship of Thor the war-god, blind adoration of the hero amounting almost to deification of the nation's head. Of course the purpose of it all is political, designed to bind the people together in an exalted mood to give the nation strength and make the State supreme. They are all old idolatries revived in an age which we were calling an age of science and reason. Intel-

lectually they are beneath contempt to rational man, and morally they are a disgrace and offence to spiritual man. It is a terrifying thought that almost overnight civilised man should revert to barbarism and find his unified world shattered.

V

We can hardly overestimate the great advance in the development of the race that Monotheism meant, the revelation of the one living God of all the earth. The idea is on a level of thought high as the heavens above the idea at the root of Polytheism. It gave unity to the world and to man, as well as to God. With the worship of many gods—local, tribal, national deities—there can be no reason in the universe, no consistent meaning in creation, and no consecutive purpose in history. The intellectual advance of Monotheism is almost infinite; for it brought reason and order into the world. There could be nothing but mental confusion, so long as the universe was supposed to be governed haphazard and piecemeal. Consistent thought about nature or human history was impossible.

Science in its modern sense had its birth in Monotheism. The idea of the uniformity of nature, which is the first principle of science, was impossible till the human mind swept aside the intellectual confusion of Polytheism. That was done historically by the idea of the unity of God, so that the religion of the Bible is the cradle of science. The conception of law, which is at the root of science, dawned upon the mind of man through the conception of the one law-giver. The world was seen to be consistent, of a piece, with unbroken continuity. If there be not mind in the world there could be no point of contact for mind. When men discarded the distraction of lords many and gods many, it became possible for them to recognise uniformity, to see that law reigned, and to think rationally of nature and of man.

The moral advance is infinite as well as the intellectual. With many gods of varying temperament and conflicting principles, there could be no intelligible code of morality. The idea of a moral law fixed and eternal was impossible. It was largely a question of caprice, and favouritism was part and parcel of the system. The deity who ruled in a certain place, or who

affected certain kinds of events, had to be propitiated according to his supposed character. A moral law, universal in its working, binding for all, binding even for God, could not even be dreamt of. The basis for moral conduct is taken away, if it is conceivable that a thing could be right here and wrong there, right for one deity and wrong for another, right even for the same deity at one time and wrong at another, if he can be persuaded by gifts and prayers and sacrifices to make right wrong on any occasion for any consideration. There could be no order which was recognised to be intrinsically divine. There was bound to be nothing but moral confusion on a distracted earth.

It looks as if we were back in the welter of that intellectual ineptitude and moral confusion. With old idolatries revived and local gods enthroned, this poor broken human life of ours seems lost in a trackless waste. Even science as we thought of it disappears, when men think and speak of 'German' science and an 'Aryan' race. The very intellect of man is shattered. And morally the idea of law itself vanishes into thin air, when the fiat of a party,

or the will of an absolute State, is the only law there is. The world is losing its soul as well as its reason, because it has lost God. Men are giving up faith in reason and reasoned argument, and giving themselves to the mass hysteria of mass movements. It follows that they are losing faith in freedom. If we do not recover this basal faith in God and man, there is no way back to sanity, and settled peace, and an ordered future. As a race we are threatened with moral and spiritual bankruptcy.

VI

There has been everywhere, among democracies as well as elsewhere, a weakening of the sense of personal responsibility, part of which is due to the vast mechanical organisation of modern life. Part of it is perhaps due to the emphasis of what is called the social conscience. Much of that modern emphasis is good, awakening men to the existence of social evils, to corporate responsibility for conditions that are a disgrace to civilisation. But the social conscience will not operate long, when character as a whole has disintegrated. Char-

acter must rest on a solid base, a reasoned and confident attitude to life, born of a vital faith. The materialistic philosophy of our day, on which Marxism founds itself, has made possible both the Communist and the Nazi States, whose claims over the minds and souls of men make personal conscience wither at the root.

The freedom which democracy guarantees, and the tolerance that makes it possible to live in unity amid diversity, were born of the Christian faith that we have one God the Heavenly Father, and therefore all we are brethren. It means for one thing that men can trust one another, not merely in ordinary business and social relations, but trust each other in making and working the great community we call the State, and, it may be, one day trust each other to create a society of nations in which self-respecting men and peoples can live. Nothing else can satisfy the Christian conscience enlightened by the great Christian affirmation.

For this we must recover some ancient loyalties, swamped by the compelling power of the one loyalty to the monstrous Dagon of the State. A renewed trust in God and man

must mean, for sanity and safety, some old loyalties, such as the sanctity of treaties, and sacredness of the plighted word. Democracy must build on the solid rock of morality with its settled standards of conduct. The most appalling thing today is that men and nations seem to have thrown overboard principles of honour, without which in the long run no social order is possible. The righteous man of the Psalm is one who "sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not." Dictators seem to think that a sign of weakness and folly. When moral standards are discarded and religion is dethroned, there is nothing left on which to build. There is certainly no under-pinning for democratic institutions in materialism of life and thought. Absolutism of one sort or another becomes inevitable.

The force of the religious appeal today is weakened by two extremes even among its friends. One extreme looks on the world as hopelessly evil. All the Gospel can do is to save some souls out of its clutches. The other extreme assumes that there is not much wrong with the world and that human nature is intrinsically good. On the one hand a pessimism

which asserts that nothing can be done; on the other an optimism which says nothing much need be done. All the forms of humanism recently so fashionable, which exalt man as the master of his fate, are rather fading away now before the facts, the stubborn deadweight of evil. The other is the truer, though it is stated in a false form. God and the world of man are so torn apart that it is difficult to see how the idea even of Incarnation could be possible. Man is so vile and corrupt that there is no point of contact between him and God. But the central affirmation of Christianity is that God can come—has come—into human life. The heart of the Gospel is that we believe in God and in man through Jesus Christ.

But man will never be in his right place till God is again put in the centre. That is why the New Testament glows with hope of a redeemed humanity. In the troubled story of Scotland since the days of John Knox, the Scottish Church has had to wrestle with the claims of the State to control the Christian conscience. With all its faults of narrowness and intolerance, it has ever stood for the Sovereignty of God. The issue appeared again

and again and had to be fought out, so that it may be said that the history of Scotland from the Reformation is the history of the Church of Scotland. The watchword was the great phrase, "The Crown-rights of the Redeemer." It was also the watchword of liberty. Scottish preachers have bearded kings, and withstood the terrific pressure of a powerful government, have suffered bonds and exile and death. They were content to make their testimony, even if they had to seal it with their blood. Their cause of the unfettered conscience won—as win it must in a world where weak man can be reinforced by God. If the titanic force, which today is gripping peoples so swiftly and so dramatically, should sweep the world, and freedom everywhere seem to die, here and there some will stand and keep the faith, till the tempest be spent and a better day arrive; here and there, if only as of old on a lonely Scottish m or, some witness will live and die for the Crown-rights of the Redeemer.

Chapter IV

FREEDOM

I

Freedom, like all great words, has many meanings, and counsel is often darkened because men use the word in different senses. Also in our complicated life it is not easy to say how far the demand for freedom takes us. It is often thought of only negatively as being rid of some restriction. A man released from slavery, or let out from prison, is in a state of freedom. But the word has richer meanings than the bare liberty of not being in jail. Besides, we cannot forget that all of us enjoy more liberty because some men are in jail. Society is safe sometimes because individual liberty is curbed. Only law, and that means organised social coercion, prevents us from being the prey of disorder and crime. We enjoy freedom from some epidemics, because we enforce regulations which compel people to obey.

The eighteenth century spoke a great deal about the rights of man, and assumed that nature endowed man with certain abstract rights, such as the right of liberty. It is perhaps more accurate to say that nature endows man with instincts, and desires, and capacities. Rights are the creation of society, of law; and the real question is how much right to liberty society can and should give. Obviously there are limits to all the claims of freedom we often so glibly make—freedom of thought, of speech, of the printed word, of assembly, of worship, and the rest. At any rate, as things are, if we ask for unconditional individual liberty to be what we like, and say what we like, and do what we like, it is certain we will not get it. Also, we do not forget that in our world of today all our claims in this line are exposed to a mighty challenge.

We cannot go back as many philosophers in the eighteenth century did to a mythical state of nature, and demand the rights of our heritage. For we have no such heritage of freedom. The picture of the free and noble savage, who lost his beautiful freedom in the darkening ways of human history, is a myth.

The poet Dryden stated the myth better than the philosophers with their 'social contract' theory:

> I am as free as Nature first made man,
> Ere the base laws of servitude began,
> When wild in woods the noble savage ran.

As a fact the savage is the least free of man, enslaved by fears and superstitions, held bound by taboos, always the victim within and without of force. The history of civilisation is the history of the liberation of man from the servitude of the savage to something like real freedom. We might have made faster progress, if people in general cared more than they do to be free.

Indeed, one of the disturbing facts to all lovers of liberty is that people are easily content with very little freedom. They like to feel safe, and even be told what to do and what to think. Edmund Burke said that the people never give up their liberties but under some delusion. If so, it does not seem hard to delude them. Burke was a little under the idea that liberty was a heritage from the state of nature of primal man, instead of an achieve-

ment which man by blood and tears has to acquire. It is easy to see why dictatorship should find an enemy in Christianity; for Christianity is ever seeking and contriving that men should *want* to be free. Freedom is the very air of Christianity. "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." All true freedom is bound up in the faith of Christ. Men have lost their liberty in some places, and are in danger of losing it everywhere, because they have smaller and poorer ideas of its nature than the Christian, because they have not stood firm in the liberty whereby Christ hath made us free.

St. Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians, who had known the full freedom of the Gospel and had reverted to a lower type of life, in bondage to an outworn law. The Epistle might well be studied today, when this same freedom is questioned and challenged, and when men have lost the fresh vitalising power of Christian freedom. It is not surprising that this Epistle played such a large part at the Reformation, when the same principle of freedom was in question. Luther wrote his great Commentary on Galatians in view of the issue then raised.

St. Paul summed up the very essence and purpose of the Gospel as seen from this point of view in his stirring trumpet-toned words, "It is for freedom that Christ set us free; stand firm therefore and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage."[1] The Christian Gospel is the Charter of human liberty.

II

What then are the Christian principles, which we must absorb and cleave to if we would attain and safeguard freedom? The first is to accept fully and live out courageously the amazing faith of Jesus in the infinite worth of the single life. His emphasis on personality is inescapable to all who know anything of His life and teaching. He set the single soul, if need be, over against the whole world. If a life is of such supreme worth as Jesus asserted, it demands freedom to realise itself. So Christian freedom is always, to begin with, *personal* freedom. The soul that knows the love of God is free from all manner of thralldom. In a sense no one can

[1] Galatians v. 1.

take from you your inner freedom if you have it. Poets have sung nobly about essential freedom—that the heart is a free and fetterless thing, that my mind to me a kingdom is, that stone walls do not a prison make nor iron bars a cage. There is always that citadel of the unconquerable soul, which the tyrant's hand can never touch.

A Government could put John Bunyan in prison and keep him from preaching, but it could not prevent him from dreaming his wonderful dream of the Pilgrim's Progress. Indeed it was the jail that gave him his chance to dream: "As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where was a Den, and I laid me down in that place to sleep; and as I slept I dreamed a dream." Authority that did not like his preaching could keep him in the den, but that is all it could do. A Government can put Niemöller in a concentration camp, but it can't prevent his becoming a centre for the faith and hope and prayers of countless souls in and out of Germany. Caesar could hold Paul in a Roman prison, but could not imprison his mind and his great heart, and could not destroy his per-

suasion that nothing could separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus his Lord. The demand for freedom of thought seems inalienable, and yet we see why tyranny should attempt to shackle thought; for free thought will naturally seek to express itself in speech and other forms. It is inevitable that authority should seek the suppression of opinions by force, because opinions may be critical of the authority, and opinions have a way of spreading.

But this emphasis on personality and the intrinsic worth of the single life goes further than giving you the right to be yourself. It implies that a man, every man, must be treated not as a means but an end. Man must not be exploited for gain or for glory, must not be subordinated to a machine of Industry or a machine of State. We need only think of Jesus' tender care for the poor and the outcasts, His withering words about offences against children, to realise His judgment on a point of view common enough in the world today. To treat men as cannon-fodder or merely as material for the industrial machine, to deny them the liberty of sons of God is

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blasphemy—the sin against the Holy Ghost. Said I not truly that the Christian Gospel is the charter of the liberty of man ?

III

Already we are seeing that Christian freedom is not, and certainly cannot remain, a merely personal thing. Jesus related all His teaching to the Kingdom of God, demanding freedom for free souls, but never free in the sense of *unrelated.* It points to a society where the freedom is common, mutual, contributing. It is this social aspect of our subject which shows us the way out of some of the practical problems which meet the claim we make for freedom. We can only be free in the best sense in a society; for we are more than individuals. We are social beings by nature, born into a society, and in isolation could never have been man, nor remain men. So the whole idea of freedom has to be related to society.

We see for one thing that for any social life there must be authority and obedience to it. But the finest and most securely rooted authority

bases itself on free and rational obedience. Coercion is a sign of a low type of society. A social order which can only be held together by penalties, by the strong hand of the ruler, by ceaseless compulsions, by repressing all individuality, belongs to the class of the lower civilisations. All higher stages of social development are marked by the increase of liberty, rather than by repressive laws. In the long run freedom aids good government; for only thus is self-criticism possible, and without criticism a government becomes inert or corrupt. The denial of freedom implies something like infallibility in the authority that denies it. It assumes that it knows what is good for the rest of us.

We have to keep our faith in freedom these difficult days when we see it flouted on every hand. We have to go on believing in the method of progress through liberty. The method seems so feeble, so slow, so halting beside the full-blooded brutal alternative. We have to encourage our hearts and brace our minds with the good reasons we have for our faith. One of these reasons has been mentioned as the only sure way of improving

government, and giving us an authority that we willingly obey. Another reason is that the effect of liberty on character is an important social asset. It helps to create men. John Stuart Mill put it, "It is of importance not only what men do, but what manner of men they are that do it." Freedom improves the citizens and subjects of a State. It improves the mind and strengthens the character. It educates by freedom. Only in freedom can some forms of human excellence blossom and come to fruit. Only in the free interchange of opinion and idea can we come near the all-embracing truth. The denial of freedom prevents new ideas and fresh forms of truth. It stifles the growth and development of the noblest and richest life. You have not necessarily convinced a man when you have silenced him. When you rely on force instead of persuasion, at the best you make your victim a hypocrite instead of a convert.

IV

We may think that there is no serious danger to liberty among us living in a self-governing

democracy, but real freedom can be menaced in a democracy. There is always the danger of various kinds of mob rule—the compelling terrorism of intolerant public opinion organised to put over a policy. We are all tempted to use it in the interest of what we think good ends. There are things in the world around us of which some of us disapprove, things we would like to see disappear. There are things we would forcibly uproot if we could, and there is always the temptation, given the power, to use it and clear the field of what we think noxious weeds. There are ideas which we think wrong or evil and which we feel sure are mischievous and dangerous. We are so indignant that we want to exterminate the evil thing. When Straus' *Leben Jesu* was first published it almost convulsed Prussia, and there was a wide demand that the book should be suppressed by the government. Neander, the great Christian theologian, said "No! Le us answer it by argument." He was surely right. To suppress it by force would look as if it could not be answered by argument. Answered it was, and the book has faded out into comparative insignificance. Germany

would not be the problem it is to the civilised world today, if the fine spirit of Neander prevailed there now.

We are impatient with the slow, slumbering methods of freedom, and are tempted to take short-cuts and achieve good by quicker but unworthy means. We can only be saved from this by ever remembering the guiding principles of Christ, faith in inviolable personality, and faith in His great purpose to create a society in which men live in the fellowship and freedom of the Kingdom of God.

We must keep the faith—faith in the method of progress through liberty. But we have to go on with progress, reforming abuses, redressing wrongs, aiming at truer and ever-increasing justice. In the spirit of Jesus we must be ever alive to human values. We must be tolerant and patient, and must resist the temptation to attain our ends by dictatorial means. We must maintain the liberty and the free institutions bequeathed to us through the struggle and sacrifice of our forefathers. But this cannot be done negatively, as if either our liberty or our institutions were fixed things merely to be defended. It must be done by constant

attempt to make adjustment, and to interpret freedom to suit the changing world.

Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. Niemöller and the faithful remnant of the Lutheran clergy would be in a stronger position today, if they had not let so much go by default. As liberty after liberty was attacked and curtailed, they were silent. They did not seem to see that freedom is all of a piece and applies in every realm of life. They made no protest when freedom of the press was lost, and freedom of speech, and of assembly, and of scholarship. They did not fight for the freedom of Jews to be Jews. When at last the freedom of worship was touched, they find they have lost all their natural allies. They might have known that sooner or later the blow would fall also on the freedom they specially cherished. Demosthenes in one of his great speeches said, "There is one safeguard known generally to the wise, which is an advantage and security to all, but especially to democracies as against despots. What is it ? Distrust." Some seem to think they are asking for freedom when they ask to be let alone, and that everyone has the right to do as he likes so long as he does not

interfere with others. That is a poor, narrow, self-assertive view of freedom, which has not come into sight of the Christian ideal of it. The Christian ideal looks to the play of free personalities, reaching completion in the fellowship and in the service of the whole.

V

This leads to a further guiding principle of Christ's, which completes and perfects our whole conception of freedom. We have seen that it has to be related to society, which practically means that it is always freedom under law. Otherwise it can easily degenerate into licence. Under law it is more or less directed to social ends. We sometimes think of law as only restricting freedom, preventing us from being really free, but that is a false view. We are free physically when we obey the laws of health, not when we violate them. We are free mentally when we give ourselves in bondage to truth, not when we follow falsehood. We are free morally when we obey the ethical laws of life, not when we become a rebel against good. We are free spiritually when

we bring everything, including our freedom, under the *law of love.*

There are some forms of freedom which are disintegrating, purely personal, selfish and self-assertive. Such freedom fails to maintain itself. No wonder liberty is lost if that is all men mean by it. It deserves to be lost; for it gives us a world of jarring, warring figures, each revolving on its own orbit. Some other forms of freedom are finer and larger, with some sense of social obligation, with the thought of a free society with mutual duties as well as rights. Sometimes this also fails, because it is cold and legalistic, and breaks down through undue social control. The only way to escape these evils, of narrow, limited, self-assertive freedom on the one side, and on the other of a new bondage of rules and social enactments, is to bring freedom gladly and whole-heartedly under the law of love. St. Paul, working out the relation of freedom to law, points this as the way: "For love is the fulfilling of the law."

Love, like freedom and other great words, has a bewildering variety of meanings. Here, as used by Christ and St. Paul, it does not mean romantic passion or emotional exaltation. It

is an ethical quality, working itself out in the whole of life. It means the expression of active good-will. It means giving ourselves and all we are to the highest interests of man. It means living by the standard of Christ and following His example. Only then are we fully emancipated when we so give ourselves to God, "Whose service is perfect freedom." Only in this great light of love will we be able to respect personality—our own and that of others. Only so will we save moral values from being crushed by material forces, and keep justice, and truth, and mercy alive on the earth.

If this ideal of freedom seems too high, remember that all lesser ones have failed, and remember that the only alternative to freedom is force. And if we fear that force will win the day in all the realms of man's life, it is because we are taking short views. The unity and discipline, for example, achieved by dictators are very impressive, but they are more on the surface than appears. When examined closely, it becomes evident that a dictatorship is only a war-machine. It can prepare for war efficiently and wage war ruthlessly, but it destroys

the qualities and virtues that make for civil peace and prosperity. In the long run even in the terrible and prolonged strain of modern war, morale will hold when discipline collapses. We do not forget that in the World War it was the authoritarian countries that broke, and the democracies that held fast.

We cannot imagine a social order that lives for war or by war lasting. That would be to belie every high thought of man, and make the world a madhouse. Was it not Julius Caesar, a great soldier, who said that a nation cannot be permanently governed by martial law? If then force is out of court as a final method of handling life, freedom comes to its own. But freedom will not be secure, and will never achieve its true end, unless it is seen in the light of the Christian ideal, and used as an asset to the Kingdom of God.

Chapter V

TOLERANCE

I

The human race seems to be intolerant by nature. I suppose this can be explained by looking far back into our history and heredity. It also helps to show the good that lies in it. We are gregarious, and every herd looks with suspicion on anything peculiar or exceptional. A herd has to keep together for mutual protection, and cannot permit any freak to disturb and break the union. All idiosyncrasies must be suppressed in the interest of the common good. This demand for likeness and conformity comes therefore from a necessary cause. We can see it work out in human society in a time of crisis, especially the terrible crisis of war. A nation fighting for its very life cannot permit positions that weaken it. It dare not allow any of its members even to be neutral. In the stress and strain of the struggle the nation feels that its existence is at stake, and

self-preservation becomes the one and only law of nature. This indeed is one of the curses of war, one of the intellectual and spiritual objections to it, that in war the society is of necessity intolerant.

We have taken this ancient tribal characteristic of the herd in danger; and have carried it into all our life, so that it is no exaggeration to say that men are naturally intolerant. We see this right through history in the treatment meted out to any dissenters from the usual. Even sects and classes, who were cruelly persecuted and who fought for liberty for themselves, never seemed to learn the real lesson of tolerance. When they achieved freedom themselves they treated the others with the same ruthless severity. The Pilgrim Fathers have often been called champions of religious liberty, but that is a mistake. They did not believe in religious liberty, in our modern sense, either for themselves or others. They left England for the right to worship God as they desired, but they would not permit any other form of worship and belief. They in turn persecuted Baptists and Quakers. We humans seem to be naturally intolerant.

Of course there have been all through the centuries some glorious exceptions, some shining examples of true tolerance, sometimes in places and times when we would not expect it. Henry of Navarre had many obvious faults of life and character, but he did display this virtue. He was a Huguenot, and when he came to the throne of France the persecuted Protestant sect, to which he belonged, expected to ride rough-shod over those who had oppressed them. They were terribly disappointed when he really applied their own principle of tolerance. In an intolerant age he showed magnanimity and tolerance. There have been many finer illustrations of the virtue by men who had deeper convictions of religion than he had. In every age there have been some saints, who refused to persecute, who sincerely believed in tolerance, and exemplified it in their life and conduct.

II

It is what we might expect, as it comes direct from the life and teaching of Jesus. Here is a plain lesson in charity and tolerance to His

disciples straight from the lips of the Master. An outsider, a man who did not belong to the company of the disciples, was found using Christ's name as an exorcism. John, who reported it to Jesus, said, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbade him because he followeth not us." But Jesus said, "Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us." [1]

No doubt there was something good in the disciples' attitude. They were full of loving zeal for their Master, and were jealous for His fame. In mistaken loyalty they did not like to see an unauthorised practitioner using His name and influence. But at bottom it was intolerance, and what we call in modern speech partisan feeling. The thing that really stung them was that *he followeth not us*. There was some wounded dignity about it. Much of our religious intolerance has this earthy root of personal pique and dislike of outsiders. We forbade him because he followeth not us—does not belong to our sect, has not the hall-mark of our school, a rank outsider.

[1] St. Mark ix. 38-40.

We easily fall into the disciples' mistake, rebuked by Jesus, of making agreement with us the test of religion. This is the source of the narrow bigotry and intolerant zeal which disfigure history, which have lit the faggots and sharpened the sword, which have changed the doctrine of the Cross for the doctrine of the stake. How hard even for Christian disciples to learn the lesson that spiritual truth cannot be confined to any group, that the Gospel is not following us, belonging to our company, a matter of external organisation. It is spirit, it is life. The way of the spirit is the way of the wind —it bloweth where it listeth, calling its prophets now from the royal palace (like Zephaniah), now from the priesthood (like Ezekiel), now from following the herd (like Amos).

The history of the Christian Church can be made to read like a dreary waste of polemic, a record of strife about rival doctrines, rival factions, rival systems of government. Churches have been, and are, divided on points of doctrine, and points of worship, and points of government. Every item of the creed was accepted only after fierce quarrels, sometimes to the shedding of blood, followed

by anathemas and exile. It has often been remarked that religious discussions display more asperity and bitterness than ordinary discussions. It has often struck dispassionate observers with wonder that the Gospel which comes with peace and good-will to men should create the fiercest controversy, displaying more heat than light. Of course it is pitiable that it should be so, but there are some considerations that explain it.

One is that the questions raised are so near the hearts of the disputants. That is why they take it so seriously. If they cared less, they would be cooler and less acrimonious. Because religion is everything to them, they fight to the last ditch for what they feel essential to truth. With fewer and less intense convictions they would take the whole subject lightly. Another reason for the keenness of religious controversy is that it is among those who are near each other in spirit. It is strange but true that the bitterest quarrels are always among friends. You don't dispute with the man in the street, but with someone of your own household. You don't dispute with the man with whom you have nothing in common. Home-quarrels

are always the most bitter, and religious disputes are home-quarrels.

III

I think this can be said with truth, that Christians have really (slowly but really) learned something of their Master's great spirit. There is more tolerance about religious differences among religious people than has ever been. Even the most dogmatic of us would not consign opponents to torture and bonds and fire. After centuries of strife we have learned something of the lesson Jesus taught His disciples. We are more tolerant about religious differences than ever in human history. Part of this has come from within, by absorbing some of the spirit of our Lord, and by a better understanding of the essence of His faith. Part of it has come, let us confess, by hard blows from without, by attack and criticism and withering satire.

No one did this more effectively than Voltaire. One of his trenchant strokes was, " The man who says to me, 'Believe as I do or God will damn you,' will presently say, 'Believe as

I do or I will assassinate you.'" He fought relentlessly against the fanaticism and intolerance of the Church of his day and place. He thought that all intolerance had its root in the ecclesiastical power, and that had to be destroyed as the necessary step to social health. He assumed that if we crushed the infamy of ecclesiasticism (*écrasez l'infâme*) all would be well. He was probably right in his day, but the disease is deeper than he thought. The ecclesiastics he fought were only men, and were displaying what we have seen in history to be a human infirmity. The world needed a Voltaire. In better times he might have been less bitter and cynical, and might not have earned the reputation of being an infidel. The last words he wrote on his death-bed were, "I die adoring God, loving my friends, not hating my enemies, and detesting superstition. (Signed) VOLTAIRE, Feb. 28th 1778." It is not a bad epitaph for a man or a life.

Perhaps the world could do with another Voltaire, who would pour his scathing wit on some of our present superstitions. It does not look as if man as a whole had learned the

lesson of tolerance. Ecclesiastical tyranny can be as bad as Voltaire painted it, but it is not as intolerable as political tyranny. Political oppression and corruption can come very near the hearts and hearths of man. Groups that differ on economic theory or political principle are fiercely intolerant. If they had their way, they would not permit us to exist on this planet except on their terms. Communists in Russia simply eliminate all who disagree, wipe them out with ruthless vigour. The Nazi regime will not tolerate even difference of opinion. The one remedy for difference is a blood-purge. "Believe as I do or I will assassinate you" is more than an idle threat today. It is a graphic description of what is happening. Even in our democratic countries I know men who are working quite cheerfully for real class war, expecting it, desiring it—gaily ignorant of the fact which history teaches, that of all wars class wars are the bitterest and bloodiest. One thing is certain, that democracy cannot function as a practical system without a wide and wise tolerance, which allows scope for very varied opinions and positions.

IV

We have to apply our Christian principle of tolerance in every region of life. This does not mean that we give up principle for the sake of peace, that we weakly assent to what we believe evil. Nor does it mean that we are neutral in an issue. Every virtue can easily slip over into a vice, and this is perhaps specially true of tolerance. Real tolerance is born of love and shows itself in the desire to consider others, to be open-minded to the opinions of others, to be kind in all our dealings with others, and generous in our estimates of others. But this generosity and good-will can easily become soft compliance. When a moral issue is drawn, tolerance can spend all its time in straddling the line. It can become a mood of easy-going concession, and that very soon breeds indifference. It is not hard to be tolerant, if you do not care one way or the other, if you are hazy about right and wrong. Some men are praised for their breadth of view and their wide tolerance of differing opinions, who should be blamed for having no opinions to speak of.

Some tolerance is even worse, a cynical acceptance of what is. "All cats are grey in the dark." If a man lives in a moral twilight, there are no clean-cut lines, and all colours shade into dull grey. It is sometimes the superior attitude of the mere spectator, who looks at the human scene as if he could have no part in it. He looks at it as from a height, and smiles at the antics of men. "Lord, what fools these mortals be!" He neither loves nor hates. He has no real principles, no standards of judgment, no concern one way or the other. That is not tolerance, but besotted indifference.

True tolerance exists only among men who are passionately convinced, but have such a high thought of truth that they dare not dim its radiance by unworthy means. They will not sully its beauty by resort to force or violence. Moral ends cannot be advanced by immoral means. They know instinctively that truth lies deeper than surface opinions. They also know that truth is larger than can be comprehended by any one mind or any one group. It takes all sorts of people to make the world. If in addition to having most materials machine-made standardised products, we had

all human character made to pattern, it would be a poorer world. We might be richer in goods, motor-cars and the rest, but we would be poorer in culture, and civilisation would cease. Is it too much to look for a state of society where reason and law would prevail, where brute force was not the sole weapon of conviction, where different types of life and even different forms of government could exist in reasonable peace and amity?

V

Many perplexing problems emerge in these days of contending philosophies of social life. For example, what attitude should a self-governing democracy take to another government which denies to its citizens the rights and liberties by which a democracy lives? Should it seek to impose its type of life on its neighbour, and act as a kind of missionary for the sort of government it believes in? We rather resent that, when an alien form like Communism tries to extend its doctrine among ourselves and change our system into its likeness. That seems one sure way to bring war near. Or should

it exercise tolerance here, remembering that other countries have the right to develop their own life in their own way? This seems to me surely right. As long as States have separate existence, we have to respect their individuality, and must devise ways of living in peace amid diverse types of government. This does not mean that we as persons must belie our conviction, condone injustice, and be silent in the presence of wrong. The very heart of our democratic faith is that a cause must prevail by persuasion. And the very heart of our Christian faith is that we are citizens of the world with duties that cannot be confined to where we are. If we are neutral where justice is concerned, we fail to be impartial.

But even here we cannot forget that it is easy to let our natural bias of mind blind our judgment and warp our thought. We know how hard it is to get unprejudiced opinion of any contemporary event. Almost the only place where we get real objectivity of statement is in science, and that is because the thing studied is usually remote from the passions and desires of the moment. Our views are so uncritical when we favour something, and so unbridled

in condemnation when we are opposed to it. Even in people, or events, or systems that we dislike there are usually things worthy of praise, but in our partisan mood we just damn everything alike. As a fact our indictment of a cause we oppose would be more effective by a generous estimate of its virtues, and by a sobriety of statement of its vices, and above all by a scrupulous fairness of method.

How are we going to get this lovely grace of tolerance practised by men, and how are we to get a social state where it can be exercised? Only by religion. Nothing else has power to transform the character, and tame the unruly heart, and build up a society in which it thrives. It can only exist in a state of peace and good-will. We who call ourselves by the name of Christ must go on humbly and sincerely practising it everywhere. We must still go on exemplifying it, not only in society at large, and in the realm of opinion, but also in the more specific region of religion. For it still needs to be preached and practised among our brethren, who call themselves Christian and yet follow not us. There is still much room

for Christian charity and the grace of tolerance in the Church, the broken body of Christ.

Spiritual religion in its great moments has always something of this large tolerance, magnanimous, large-hearted like the tolerance of God. Once in the camp of Israel unauthorised prophecy arose, and an informer came to Moses and said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." Moses' servant, jealous of the power of his master, said, "My lord Moses, forbid them." Moses replied, "Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them."

The disciples of John the Baptist came, exclaiming that Jesus the new teacher was drawing away all the people, expecting that he would do something to assert his position. John said, "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven. He must increase, but I must decrease."

St. Paul in prison had news brought that others with whom he disagreed were preaching Christ. He suspected their motives, knew that they were opposing himself, yet he said, "Nevertheless every way, whether in pretence

or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea and will rejoice."

It is usually the small-minded disciples who show narrow bigotry and intolerant zeal. If we thought more of the sway of truth and less of our dignity and partisan spirit, we would view with generous eye all movements that go our way, even if they follow not us.

It is the mark of spiritual insight to be able to recognise goodness wherever it exists, claim kinship with it, accept it, thank God for it. It is even a higher triumph of grace to be willing to be set aside and see others do work our hands long to do, to rid the heart of pride and prejudice, and find comfort and joy in the thought that he who is not against us is for us.

Chapter VI

THE PERSECUTING SPIRIT

I

Persecution means specifically the punishment of what the persecutors deem wrong or false opinions. A brief investigation into the origin of persecution should be of value today, when we are finding the persecuting spirit dominant in spheres which seemed to be immune from it. Being in the region of opinion, it is often thought by some to be the special vice of religion. This is commonly assumed to be a completely satisfactory explanation of its origin. Indeed many have justified it, or at least explained it, as the natural fruit of strong and vital faith. It is said that Christianity makes such demands on its believers, offering salvation, fixing eternal destiny, so that nothing can be compared to it in importance. It becomes paramount duty to save men's souls, even at the cost of hurt to their bodies. The more zealous men are for the faith, the more they

will want to extend it and the more dangerous false opinions appear to them. This is the common way of explaining persecution, as born of the zeal which comes from profound conviction, and it has often been asserted that persecution is inherent in Christianity. It cannot help developing it, because of the exclusive and passionate nature of its beliefs.

The story of religious persecution is indeed a dismal one. For centuries the Church used the sword to uproot heresy, and systematically inflicted punishment for what it considered false opinions. It tried to keep the faith pure by penalties, by the forcible suppression of opposing erroneous ideas. It made itself the instrument of God's judgment. Again and again it gave up the task of meeting false teaching by argument, and took the cheaper and easier way of force. It refuted error, not by positive statement of truth, but by the strong arm. It enforced by ferocious punishment the acceptance of its statement of the faith. I am not going to dwell on the long sad story of the persecuting spirit from the days of Constantine to the Inquisition, or expatiate

on the lapse of Calvin when he condemned Servetus to the stake. We acknowledge the shameful facts, and do not seek to minimise the guilt, that Christian men so often used worldly weapons in defence of faith.

But there are obvious difficulties in the theory that persecution is inherent in religion, and that intolerance is natural to Christianity, because men are passionately convinced of truth. For, it is remarkable that the Church never went out to make converts of the heathen by force. It never, like Mohammed, took the sword to compel the unbelieving world outside to become Christian or be slaughtered. Even the Crusades were not primarily armed attempts to convert Islam, but to recover and preserve the Holy Sepulchre as a sacred relic of the faith. All the persecutions, which we have such cause to lament, were done within the fold of Christendom. The Church promoted great missionary campaigns, but never dreamed of extending Christ's Kingdom by sheer material force. Christians never attempted to proselytise by the sword. Persecution was exercised against heretics, to preserve the purity of the household of faith.

Also, the facts of history are against the theory. Christianity did not breed the persecuting spirit, and give it as an evil heritage to the world. It was a contagion from the world, which had always practised it. The Roman Empire persecuted Christians with relentless fury. The early Church was harried and scattered again and again. The whole power of the Roman State was used against them to compel them to give up their faith. They suffered persecution, not because they were bad citizens or disloyal, and not for their manner of living, but for their opinions. It was not any deep sincere religion in the Roman Government which drove it to persecute. So, it is historically absurd to explain the persecuting spirit as inherent in religion or as the result of Christianity. It was practised by statesmen, and justified by philosophers, long before the Christian Church existed. Athens condemned Socrates to death for his religious opinions. Plato, years after Socrates was compelled to drink the hemlock, said in his *Laws*, "If a person be proved guilty of impiety, let him be punished with death."

II

The fact is that persecution is utterly alien to the spirit of the Christian faith. What is more, it was specifically condemned by Jesus, and was contrary to His teaching and example. Think of what happened on the road to Jerusalem, when the little company stopped for the night at a Samaritan village. The people refused to receive Him because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem, and they did not approve of Jerusalem and its religious views. To the disciples it was an insult to their Master, and an affront to their own feelings. In anger they called on Him to take revenge for the insult. James and John said, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" Even in their rage they had an instinctive feeling that it was not the kind of thing He was likely to do, and they asked to be commissioned to do it for Him. "He turned and rebuked them. And they went to another village."[1]

We can understand, and perhaps sympathise with, the disciples in their resentment, their

[1] St. Luke ix. 54-56.

angry desire for punishment. They were tired and footsore, and only asked for the common courtesy of the time and place. They were in an exalted mood of religious feeling; for they felt they were on the eve of the climax of their Master's work and the triumph of His cause. They believed they were on the way to power, and why should not power be used now to vindicate the new regime? Personal resentment hid itself under the cloak of zeal for their Master and His cause. The real motive was human irritation at the affront of these stubborn peasants, anger, and wounded vanity. We may call their attitude human, but it is not Christian, as they soon learned as Jesus turned and rebuked them.

Even before the rebuke they knew in their heart of hearts that He stood as far as the east is from the west from any complicity with such a method. They had companied with Him too long, had heard His teaching and seen His life too closely, to imagine that He would use violence to achieve His ends. For the moment they had slipped out of sympathy with His spirit, and had lost hold of His real purpose. All the teaching of Jesus presupposes

this refusal to use violence for such an end. His message from its very nature was to work by influence not by force. It was like the little bit of leaven that would leaven the whole lump. It was like the grain of mustard seed, smallest of seeds, to become by natural process of growth a spreading tree. The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship, but the disciples must not be so. The Kingdom cometh not by observation with blare of trumpet.

And all through the centuries when His followers have used weapons of force to preserve the purity of religion, they have had an uneasy feeling that it was contrary to the teaching of Jesus and alien to His spirit. The very way they have buttressed their position with all sorts of argument about social necessity shows that they knew they were on doubtful ground. All through the centuries of persecution also there have been brave and true souls, who refused to take part in the orgies of violence against their brethren. St. Francis founded his order on principles essentially spiritual, and his whole life was a tacit protest against the persecuting spirit. There are many similar illustrations of the Christian conscience,

seeking to escape from the vicious circle of stake and faggot as means to achieve spiritual ends. They have known instinctively that fire from heaven to consume heretics was fire from hell, kindled by human rage and human lust for power.

III

If this is so, how came it that the Church so often and for so long used persecution as an instrument of policy? Its roots are not peculiarly ecclesiastical, but are found in the human heart, just as the desire for it arose in the disciples' resentment at the insult of the Samaritans. It is born of human frailty, the natural desire to override opposition and to exercise power. Wounded vanity can easily pass over into vindictiveness, and zeal can justify its excesses by pointing to its good intentions. Poor weak human nature, when dressed in a little brief authority, likes to show power over others. But this common frailty would only account for sporadic instances of it, and would not explain systematic persecution as a policy.

For that we must look at history, and see

how the Church, which had suffered martyrdom so long, came in turn to display the persecuting spirit when it got into the saddle. The world-power of the Roman State tried to break the early Church, and often seemed to succeed. Christians were again and again scattered like chaff, and every time it was found that they were scattered like seed. When the Empire failed to crush the Church, it capitulated and adopted the Church, and turned it into an ally. It was then came the terrible temptation to which it so often succumbed. Persecution, as we have seen, is not a natural policy of Christianity, but a direct denial of its Lord's spirit. It is an engine of State government. The Empire wanted unity, and sought a religion that could be made a centre of unity.

When Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, there seemed to be great advantages, an easy ascendancy, unhampered opportunities to do its great work and make the cause of Christ regnant in the world. The mighty organisation of the Empire, instead of being its bitter foe, became its compliant servant. What a miracle it seemed for the distressed martyred Church to be the recog-

nised partner of the all-powerful State! It was an amazing triumph, which concealed the terrible price it had to pay. The State lifted it from obscurity and distress into authority and security, and used it for its purposes of government. The real point is that persecution was designed not for religious but for political purposes. The Church was used to protect the established order of the State. When it became an ally of the State and grasped power, it used the weapons of the State, and acted not in the spirit of Christ but in the spirit of the world.

Every social order seeks to strengthen itself, and above all to maintain unity. It uses the strong arm of the law to prevent any weakening of its power, and in early days it was assumed that one uniform religion was needed to cement the fabric of the State. Heresy was looked on, and dealt with, as treason. When the Christian Church was made responsible for the social order of the Empire, it seemed natural and right for it to take over the means which the civil power thought necessary. It gave up its Master's way of persuasion, and took over the world's way of force, and built

up a dominant organisation to help rule the world. From a teacher of spiritual truth, it became partner of the secular power which governed by penalties and punishments. It became like the world, and sought to do Christ's work in the world's way. It is not the first, nor the last, time that the lust of power has corrupted a beneficent institution. It is when the Church goes in for statecraft that it assumes the weapons of secular government.

After the Reformation, when the Holy Roman Empire was in ruins and the idea of the unity of Christendom was lost, the component parts took over persecution to preserve their own safety. The reformers stood for freedom, gave the Bible to the people, sought to enlighten the mind and conscience of man, and never believed that spiritual religion could be enforced by compulsion. When they resorted to persecution, it was the denial of the central faith and the betrayal of their principles. When they did it, they were not thinking of the true religion they preached, but of the social order in which they lived. When Calvin condemned Servetus to death, he was thinking of Geneva and what he deemed neces-

sary for the safety and unity of the City-State. When Luther thundered against the peasants who began to practise what he had preached, he was thinking of the rule of the German princes who had supported his reformation. It was *state policy*, not religious principle, that dictated the forcible suppression of opinion. Luther paid an immense price for the support of the princes, handing over in reality the control of the reformed Church to the secular power. The Lutheran Church today is still paying part of the price as a historical agent of the government. It was a price almost comparable to the price paid by the early Church when the Empire absorbed it.

I cannot deal here with the long history of the varied relations of Church and State that have been tried through the centuries. It has varied from one extreme to another, from the subjection of the Church to the State to the control of the State by the Church as top-dog. There has been separation of Church and State as in some democracies. But the separation is not as complete as some think. It is natural that a State should welcome the aid of the Church in preserving order and aiding the

general health of the body politic. And it is natural that the Church should accept opportunities of service to the State; for it is not concerned merely with the souls of single men, but seeks to Christianise the whole social order. But the dismal story of persecution is enough to warn against letting the Gospel be perverted by becoming the mere tool of the secular power. When the Church imitates worldly organisation, or when Christian men give up their conscience to the State, the true authority of spiritual religion is bartered away for a mess of pottage. We hope it may be said that the Church of Christ has learned through sad experience that persecution was condemned by its Master and is utterly alien to His spirit.

IV

It should be easy today to see clearly where the true seat and source of the persecuting spirit lies. It is not where facile judgment has usually put it as inherent in religious faith. It was there only when religion was false to its nature and gave itself over as an agent of government. For now, when we hope religion

has repudiated persecution and has gone back haltingly to Christ's method as teacher of spiritual truth, we find certain governments entrenching themselves by ruthlessly suppressing all contrary opinion, and even suppressing Christianity itself. We see where the evil spirit came from, when we see the secular power destroying all free forms of thought, seeking to find strength and unity by standardising opinion and life, even making nationalism the only god men must worship. There is no longer any mystery as to where the persecuting spirit has been fed and nurtured.

Before the recrudescence of the great dictatorships it was assumed by the complacency of the nineteenth century that the age of persecution for opinions was over. The supposed evil influence of intolerant religious zeal on public policy was eliminated, and governments could go on their innocent blameless way, taking impartial care of all social life. It was assumed that the State, now that the bad influence of religion was gone, had given up all desire even to use the strong arm to enforce uniformity of belief. It was supposed to have learned that the social bond can be held to-

gether by other means, and could exist amid variety of opinion without breaking the real unity. If we thought so—and we did think it—we have been rudely awakened. Instead of being beaten with whips, we are being chastised with scorpions. Since men have revived the old Roman idea of the State, they have taken over the methods of government of the ancient world.

So we find today a more ruthless suppression of free opinion than ever, in States that have no scapegoat of religion to put the discredit on. With modern scientific thoroughness they even attempt to go deeper than ever ancient Rome did, and deal with the very soul of man. Rome with superb wisdom was usually content with outward conformity, and did not try to bring the inner life into agreement with its pet ideology. Today men work with the fierce intolerance of doctrinaires to give a solid front to their nation. Heresy of political opinion or of economic theory is indeed treason, to be stamped out with rigour. Truly the rulers of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. Complete allegiance is

exacted, and mass hysteria is used to support the monstrous claim. Supernationalism is exalted as a god, before which everything in man must bow. It spreads like a contagious disease.

We may think that there is no danger of it spreading as far as us. It is true that our democracy would cease to be, if the contagion spread to us in its virulent form; and it is true that so long as democracy lasts in any real form the danger is held at bay. But the Christian grace of tolerance is a tender plant, and as we now see is not so firmly rooted as perhaps once we thought. Power, to a man or to a class of men or to an institution, always carries in its bosom the temptation to use it cruelly or selfishly. There is no safeguard except in complete surrender to the spirit of Christ. The measure in which freedom and tolerance have triumphed in the civilised world (imperfect as that has been) is the fruit of the spirit of Jesus. The growing distaste for violence, the abhorrence of war, the repudiation of persecution are all born of Christian conviction. His Church has always known that the Son of Man came not to destroy men's

lives but to save them. Well have His disciples ever known what manner of spirit they should be of. And when in impatience or anger or for worldly policy they seek fire to consume, the Master turns and rebukes them.

A practical lesson from the study of persecution is that we must never allow Christianity to be identified with any particular system of government or order of life. The problem is not always easy; for we are called to work with and for the social order where we are. The task of the Gospel is not merely to snatch here a soul and there a soul out of the welter of the world and nourish spiritual life in the rescued. It cannot wash its hands of politics and economics, and assume that its work is in a spiritual sphere insulated from all other departments of human activity. It is not to save souls merely but to save the world, to permeate every realm of social life till the very Kingdoms of the world become the Kingdom of God and His Christ.

There is no solution, as zealots sometimes advocate, in the creation of a special Christian party to contend with secular parties for the control of society. That would be a calamity

so obvious that there is little danger of its general adoption, except possibly in exceptional and temporary circumstances. Supposing it happened and such a Christian party at last triumphed, once again the government of affairs would absorb Christian thought, and instant deterioration of aim and ideal would occur. If religion usurps the functions of politics or economics, it only hurts them and loses its own soul. It cannot stand aloof from the movements of the life around it, but it must not again try to 'play politics,' and betray its Master's method. It should serve but must not control; it should inspire but must not rule. It should be the master-light of all our seeing, and the inspiration of all our living.

Chapter VII

CONFORMITY

I

In the spacious days of Queen Victoria, John Morley wrote: "The right of thinking freely and acting independently, of using our minds without excessive awe of authority, and shaping our lives without unquestioning obedience to custom, is now a finally accepted principle in some sense or other with every school of thought that has the smallest chance of commanding the future." That smacks a little of the smugness and assurance and sense of security of the Victorian era, when men felt that the great battles had been fought and won. The cause of liberalism in the large sense was securely established—liberalism of thought, of personal freedom, of political institutions and of general social ideal. Of course the great battles for the soul of man are not so easily won, and the stubborn problems of life and history are never solved once and for

all. It may be that the right of thinking and acting independently and living our lives freely may command the future, but it does not universally command the present.

Insistence on conformity is more prevalent today than ever. Excessive awe of authority and unquestioning obedience to it are common features of modern life, in politics, and organised industry. Group pressure and social coercion everywhere meet us. Freedom of thought and action, which John Morley stated as a finally accepted principle, has been discarded with contempt in some quarters. The Prussian Supreme Court has ruled that as the National Socialist Party now represents the people's only political opinion, a man must be treated as an enemy of the State if he does not subscribe to that party's views. But apart from the exaggerated nationalism which demands complete control of all its citizens, social pressure is keener everywhere. There would not be these extreme claims of authority, if it could not relate itself to something natural.

Even in a freer atmosphere one of the practical problems for all of us is to decide how far we should comply with established custom and

conventional ways of living. Society is always trying to mould us in one pattern, and resents any serious departure from the usual. Emerson said that the virtue that most people request is conformity. He said this regretfully, as calling attention to a blot on human character; for his favourite doctrine was self-reliance, which he preached in season and out of it. He thought that people were too conformable, too conventional, too timid. "Trust thyself," he kept advising, "whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist." "Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind." In some moods we feel as if no more need be said. It seems plain duty to refuse to submit to the authority of numbers, to refuse to follow a multitude to do evil. In the last resort a man is responsible for himself, and no one should let himself be forced to acquiesce in traditional standards and comply with accepted habits unless they seem good to his own unfettered soul.

In politics this underlies the whole theory of democratic government. The majority rules, it is true, but a minority is allowed to protest, to persuade, to influence opinion, and in turn,

if it can, become a majority and rule. In the realm of thought the ideal has been freedom from the shackles of mere authority. Men need not be terrorised by convention, and should be allowed to dissent from the opinions and beliefs and practices of others. They need not give in to any prejudice or any custom whatever. In religion especially, this freedom is at the heart of all personal religion, which starts with the idea of personal responsibility. St. Paul claimed this for all believers, "To his own Master he standeth or falleth. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?" He called on Christians not to be conformed to this world. This is the inevitable implication from the personal relationship between God and the human soul on which religion is based.

II

In actual life this principle of complete independence is not so simple as it looks at first. It would be simple, if the social bond were not so dominant. If there are rights of the individual conscience and rights of minorities, surely there are rights of the majority. As a matter of fact,

in every region of life—business, politics, social duties—we are forced to make concessions and accommodations in order to work and live together. St. Paul, who stood so staunchly for freedom in the things of the spirit, went so far that he almost made expediency a principle. He frankly confessed that he became all things to all men in the interests of his cause. He would go as far in compromise as was possible. For instance, circumcision meant nothing to him, and he fought to prevent a party in the Church from imposing it on Gentile converts; but he did not prohibit Jewish Christians from continuing their ancient rite, and he even circumcised Timothy to avoid needless offence.

In this he was only following the example of his Master, the keynote of whose teaching was that He came not to destroy the law and the prophets but to fulfil. He did not renounce the religion of his fathers. He conformed to the law as all pious Jews did, he kept the feasts, went to the synagogue as the custom was, paid the temple tax. He said to the people, "The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you do, that observe and do." He never cut himself off

from the religious life of his time, never disfranchised himself as a Jew. He never preached rebellion, never suggested that men could find a solution of their difficulties by breaking away from the actual conditions of the time. He was a reformer, but because his reform was so fundamental he was a real conservative. Progress comes from growth, and growth implies roots. John the Baptist was a voice crying in the wilderness, a protester, apart from the life of his day; and so his work had no lasting influence. Christ's work was related to the life of the past and the present; and so it has been the life of the future ever since.

Many reformers err here. They are negative, destructive, leaving no place to join the new on to the old and the accepted. They are always condemning and protesting and denouncing, so that they end up by having no sense of proportion, and often only irritate others by stupid emphasis on accidental details. There can be a stiff fanatical adherence to a cause, which will make no concessions, even harmless, which sticks out for every point even when it is only a point and not a principle.

Even in ordinary intercourse it is common

politeness and common sense to conform wherever it is possible. To be always protesting and denying and contradicting is offensive. There is a good sense in being a man of the world. To know men and life and the ways of society, to accept the conditions of your environment, and not to be a hedgehog all bristles, makes for peace and general happiness. Some protests are so futile and so unimportant that it is silly to make them. In the Victorian era a member of Parliament created a great scene by insisting on wearing a cloth cap in the House of Commons. It was a childish gesture. Of course if his aim in life was to be a reformer of dress, it might be good publicity to push his campaign into the conventional precincts of the House of Commons. But if he had deeper things in his mind, he was only giving needless offence and hurting his real cause by indulging the vanity of eccentricity.

III

This question of conformity is not an academic and theoretic one. It confronts us practically in every affair of life. In business, in

politics, and religion, as well as in all social living, we meet the problem. It is not only the political or social or religious reformer who feels the pinch of it, but all of us have to face it in one or other of its forms. In business how far should a man accept the recognised customs of his trade or the standards of his profession? How far should he conform himself to the accepted habits and views of his circle? A young man starts in business, and at once enters into a certain atmosphere for which he is not responsible. Is he to accept the customs and standards as sacred, or at any rate as the unalterable conditions of his life and work? Or is he to kick against tradition and conventional usage in the interests of what he thinks a higher morality? No young man can begin life anywhere, in workshop, or store, or office, or in one of the professions, without being forced to consider the standards of commercial ethics, the customs of trade, the etiquette of profession, and the group pressure generally to which he is subject.

This problem hardly exists for the willing subject of an authoritarian State, which controls life for its members. He is simply the

obedient tool of orders from above, and he is relieved of all such questions of duty. It probably makes life easier to be told what to do, and what to think, and especially what not to think. There must be some compensation, or surely millions would not consent to endure the yoke. They enjoy the simplification which comes from army discipline,

> Theirs not to reason why,
> Theirs but to do and die !

But with us who believe in freedom, we must accept the burden of freedom, and submit to the disabilities of freedom. We must endure as patiently as possible the freaks and follies which freedom makes possible. We know that some dissent from accepted positions is due to conceit and the desire to be singular. We know that some have cheap ways to notoriety by protesting and dissenting and railing at all established custom. But we must be willing to permit much individual variety, and must never make a fetish of conformity; for we recognise its danger to crush the true merely because it is new.

All progress comes from nonconformity, some point of departure from the usual. There

has to be some difference, or things would simply go on as before. It is always some singularity that affords the chance for a new and fresh start. As a rule we rather resent the necessity to alter anything. We do not like to be compelled to change our views or our ways. Marked difference in another suggests a tacit reproof of our regular customs and a protest against our placid acceptance of them. Life tends always to harden and set itself in dead forms. Much of our lives must be conventional, and it is easy to make all of life an unthinking conformity. So on the whole we do not need advice about gracefully adjusting ourselves to conditions, so much as counsel to be true to principle and to follow the higher way. We need the strident call not to go like sheep with a majority when we think it wrong.

It is well to remember that, if some men keep dissenting and protesting because they are cranks, some conform because they are cowards. They always give in at the place of least resistance. To a sensitive man it is not easy to take positions that compel him to oppose his brethren. He knows he may be ostracised, given the cold shoulder, and even suffer more severe

penalty still, and he is tempted to let well or ill alone and just follow the multitude. It is hard to stand alone, hard to be treated as a malcontent. So we often silence conscience, which prompts us to stand for truth, by reminding ourselves of what we may have to pay for principle. Compliance merely for the sake of peace is ignoble, and weakens character, and impoverishes the whole life.

When we think of the temptation to go timidly with the multitude and supinely accept the majority's opinion, we must be careful to assert for ourselves, and grant to others, freedom of conscience and of mind. Especially grant to others this right. We, who know how strong social coercion can be and the constant temptation to conform, must be tender towards any who take it upon themselves to suffer for conscience' sake. It is the glory of a self-governing democracy that it permits freedom and dissent from the ways and ideas that prevail. We believe that thus we get nearer to full-orbed truth, that new light breaks upon us, and progress becomes possible. It is the glory of our religion that it never lets us escape from personal responsibility, that it brings each

soul straight into the presence of God, that in the difficult passes of life it calls us to obey God rather than man. In the last issue we are not absolved from complicity in evil because we have followed a multitude. We are called to be loyal to the truth as we know it, and indeed nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of mind and soul. Issues come before us that demand decision, and ask for complete adherence to right. Nothing can alter the fact that in choosing to go with the many on the broad and easy way means for us to make the great refusal.

IV

The principles that lie back of this whole problem of conformity are simple. They are not rules of conduct, to be blindly accepted and slavishly obeyed. There are no rules of that sort. You might like me to be more specific, and tell you what to do in this, or that, or the other circumstances. Who made me a dictator over you? There are no dictators over Christ's folk. Our Lord did not give us precepts to follow, but principles to apply, and above all He gave us an example.

You are thrown back on yourself, on conscience; you are thrown back on God. No one can tell you when and where it is right to conform, and when a true man must refuse compliance and if need be stand alone; but I say the principle which should underlie decision is simple.

It depends entirely on the spirit which inspires it as to whether conformity is a shame or a glory, a sign of weakness or of strength. When St. Paul became all things to all men, it was not from a desire to please or to avoid trouble, but because of the love in his heart that by any means he might gain some. The motive was love, that he might save and serve. When Jesus conformed, it was not through worldly wisdom or crafty policy of appearing to accept forms He really rejected. It was born of sympathy, refusing to be separated from His brethren, seeking to identify Himself with men, tying Himself up in the same bundle of human life with us all. If love akin to Christ's is in our heart we will be saved from the danger of cheap, easy conformity. We will never conform through indifference, or cowardice, or selfish love of ease, but because we too love and serve.

As conformity to be saved from sin must be inspired by love not by mere worldly wisdom, so nonconformity must be inspired by truth not by pride or self-assertive conceit. It is because we must keep sacred the integrity of our own soul and because we dare not follow a multitude to do evil. It can never be right to temporise with wrong, when the issue is drawn and men must take sides. It can never be right for the sake of peace to participate in a lie. We must obey God rather than man.

All singularity carries in its bosom a more exacting responsibility. It tunes the life to a higher pitch, and demands a stricter standard. The moral necessity laid on a man to take a stand for conscience' sake will give to the character strength and solidity. Young men are sometimes charged with seeking to be singular and taking unconventional positions just to be different from the crowd. That may be true of some, but with the mass the opposite is true of being too pliable in principle and of stifling conscience so as to be one with the multitude. They are too easily cowed into giving up their convictions, too easily moved by a sneer, too easily browbeaten by a majority.

Every social order, including a democracy, naturally wants conformity to maintain the union and to make the administration of government work smoothly. In the servile State this demand for conformity is absolute and unconditioned. It will not permit any exception, and claims complete and unquestioning obedience to the political authority. In the free State the citizens ought to feel an even larger sense of responsibility, and conform with willing obedience; for they create and instruct their government, and have a share in its decisions. The stability of democracy rests on the readiness of its citizens to accept and conform to the rule of the majority. The government has the right to expect and demand the unswerving loyalty of the members of the State. But this obedience is not unconditioned. That would be to make Caesar the ultimate authority in human life, a thesis which this book is written to deny. In the long run it is not in the best interest of the State itself that its citizens should be moved only by the herd-instinct. The free State, which lives by freedom, must be very tolerant, and should value the sturdy independence which refuses

easy compliance with public opinion. When freedom is unduly suppressed, true progress is checked and the whole level of intelligence and character is lowered. In the last issue a true man dare not hand over his conscience to the State. There may be times of severe tension and much heart-searching as to duty; for we owe to the great community we call the nation all our opportunity for a full life, protection not only of material things but of freedom and of everything we hold dear. Because he knows this and values his privileges, no wise man will lightly make himself a rebel to the commonwealth he loves. He will conform up to the very limit of conscience and principle. For this very reason the State, which grants so much freedom, should exercise tolerance up to the limit of its order and safety as a State.

Chapter VIII

COMPROMISE

I

This subject is akin to that of conformity, though with a very distinct difference. The problem suggested by it meets us in a subtler region of life. Conformity has to do mostly with conduct, with external acceptance of settled positions. A man can conform with some custom with which he disagrees, and be of the same opinion still. He does not always have to alter his views and make compromise of what he really thinks. Conformity is concerned with outward behaviour, complying with established custom, accommodating ourselves to actual conditions. The State, which has to preserve the social order, only asks for conformity, obedience to laws passed in the interests of the body politic. It does not go behind and beneath conduct to tamper with and regulate the inner life. It is only the monstrous development of the absolute State

which tries to control everything in the whole life of its subjects. That becomes an impossible task, which no State that survived for any time has ever attempted. The Roman Empire would not have prevented the early Christians from worshipping as they liked, if only they had conformed with what the Empire thought necessary for its unity and safety. The Roman Empire was wonderfully tolerant, as every Empire has to be which governs peoples of varied races and faiths.

Compromise has to do with the inner life, and makes a problem keener than mere outward conformity with the ways of the majority. It means making concessions of convictions, and surrendering opinions, and modifying principles for the sake of agreement. It implies giving up some things held true, so as to come to accord with others who do not believe as we do. Of course some demands of conformity imply compromise. That was the issue with the early Christians, who were lovers of peace and would gladly have conformed, if it had not conflicted with their basal faith. The issue was drawn over the question of the worship of the Emperor, which to the Romans was

a political rather than a religious demand. It was really designed for the unity of the Empire, and that is why they made it as easy as possible, and the Christian position seemed to them contumacious and perverse resistance to authority. If Christians would only put a pinch of incense on the altar, if they would bow before the Statue, if they would only say "O Lord Caesar," the demand of the State for conformity would be satisfied. But Christians could not conform, as it compromised their faith, which would not let them put a man, even Caesar, in place of God. To them it was the worst kind of idolatry. So they died, man after man, rather than assent to a form that stultified their faith.

II

It looks, therefore, as if there was no problem of compromise. A true man must at all costs maintain principle and concede nothing of what he holds truth for the sake of agreement and peace. But is this always the case in real life? The average man recognises the need for compromise in the settlement of the disputes

and controversies that inevitably arise. If we are to live together in any kind of society there must be 'give and take,' accommodation to circumstances and to the views and even the prejudices of others. To be always dissenting and protesting, for ever asserting independence, would make one, to say the least, an uncomfortable member of any society. And to universalise the claim, with everyone acting like that, no society at all would be possible. It could only be blind conceit which could make us think that we had all the truth, and that there could be no right in any opposing side.

Edmund Burke in his great speech on *Conciliation of America* said, "All Government—indeed every human benefit and enjoyment, every virtue, and every prudent act—is founded on compromise and barter." If he had been listened to and his general temper of mind followed, there need never have been the Revolutionary War, and the history of the world would have been different. We who despise war think that force is always the resort of the intellectually feeble who have no weapon of argument to use. We must then have some

alternative to force, and the alternative we are always advocating is conference. Conference implies compromise. It aims at mutual consent reached by concessions on both sides, abatement of rights and claims till agreement is found. Uncompromising attitude leaves us with nothing but force. Even to submit a cause to arbitration means willingness to concede things considered right, in order to settle a dispute or decide a controversy. The more we think of it, the more we see the importance of compromise, and it becomes therefore vital to discuss the claims and limits of the whole subject.

III

If it be said that compromise is permissible when dealing with affairs, but is always wrong when applied to truth which should be held sacred, are we sure of that? Let me illustrate by what I may call the problem of the preacher; for it is in the realm of religion that the greatest difficulty lies. The preacher has truth which he believes to be vital, and he feels some call of conscience and heart to give his life to the proclamation of the truth. He has opened his

own heart to the truth and he has honestly applied his mind to the statement of it, so that he is sure of his message. Here is the truth, and there is the world, sorely in need of the truth, dying for lack of it. At first it seems a simple thing to know and do his duty. The one was made for the other—the truth for the world, the message of God for the hearts of men.

But it is not so simple as it looks. If he is a thoughtful man, he must ask some very fundamental questions about the nature of truth, and about the character of his mission and his commission. Who and what is he, the messenger of the Gospel in which he believes? Is he simply the channel, through which flows the water of life for thirsty souls? If the whole deliverance of truth were mechanical, that figure might apply—and some types of theology would accept that figure as accurate. There are some old phrases to describe the preacher, which seem to suggest this simple statement of his function, such as a herald of the Gospel, or an ambassador of God. Does that mean that he goes as an ambassador from his Master to a hostile power, carrying the terms of peace?

Does he merely have to go boldly to the world, and state the terms of God's reconciliation? That would certainly give him a tremendous authority, almost the power of a vice-regent of God. It would also simplify his task very much. He would not need to know much or anything of the hostile power to which he speaks. He could not alter his message by one jot or tittle, nor would he need to interpret it, though he might have to translate it. All he would need to do is to carry the message, state God's will fearlessly, and lay down the terms of peace and salvation.

Is this all he need be and do? It would give him immense authority, and relieve him of a heavy burden, if all he, as a herald of the Gospel, had to do was to go to men and say, Hear the word of God, or Listen to the declaration of the Church! He would not have to assimilate that word of God, or make rational and intelligible to himself that declaration of the Church. He would not have to tire brain and heart trying to understand the world and its problems, and to know this age in which we live with its peculiar intellectual and moral and even spiritual slant. Preaching

is indeed the deliverance of truth, but what is the nature of truth? Surely it cannot be dealt with as slabs of true things, or to use a more dignified figure, the treasure of truth cannot be just given and taken like pieces of gold.

For, preaching is more than the accurate deliverance of truth. If that were all it might be done by a phonograph. It is also a witness, a personal testimony, the statement of an experience. It is truth made personal, even if possible bathed in personality. A truth has to be taken in by me, and become so mine that it may be said to make the circuit of my veins and come out coloured by my life's blood. That is to say that truth has to be accommodated to the personality of the man who speaks truth. It must be true to him, so that he can say as Paul said, "According to my Gospel"—not Peter's or John's, or any other man's, but *my* Gospel. The Gospel can be spoken of as the one message to the world, but it takes colour from the mind and soul of the man who declares it.

But if this is so, there is another legitimate and necessary accommodation to make; for truth is not only spoken by a person, but to

persons. Is there not further need, then, to accommodate the truth to the human beings you long also to accept the truth? They are not bare individuals, but persons living in a certain year of grace in the intellectual climate of their age, an age with points of attraction to the truth if also points of repulsion. St. Paul tells us that he deliberately spoke as a Jew to Jews, as a Gentile to Gentiles, if by any means he might gain some. That means that he took people as he found them, and sought to link on his new message to whatever in the old he found hospitable. It meant ordinary wisdom in avoiding points of offence, in making compromise wherever he could. It meant shaping his message to suit the audience he had in mind.

IV

We can see some of the dangers of compromise, even when we acknowledge the legitimate place it has in life. There are false forms of it, which we should recognise and brand as false. There is the compromise of worldly wisdom, in order to get something for self, peace, or gain of some sort. In Burton's *Life*

of Hume there is a letter which shows the philosopher in a very poor light one would not expect from the man who wakened Kant from his dogmatic slumber. It is to a young man who had religious scruples, advising him to hide his real views and become a minister really for the sake of the loaves and fishes. The letter runs: "It is putting too great a respect on the vulgar and their superstitions to pique oneself on sincerity with regard to them. . . . The Pythian oracle advised every one to worship the gods. I wish it were still in my power to be a hypocrite in this particular. The common duties of society usually require it; and the ecclesiastical profession only adds a little more to an innocent dissimulation, or rather simulation, without which it is impossible to pass through the world." What a personal degradation of character it suggests, that a man should serve at an altar he despises for a morsel of bread! We see how a useful and necessary principle of compromise can be subverted to base and ignoble ends.

This degradation is not confined to religious teachers. It is possible to everyone who has to deal with his fellows. It means hiding one's

true views and settled convictions for some personal gain. The demagogue plays on the passions of the mob, despises them, but uses them as a tool for his own ambition. His purpose is not to give them larger and truer views. He comes down to their level as he thinks, but not to raise them to something higher, but that he may get their support for himself. He too is selling his birthright as a man for a mess of pottage. Politicians will join a party they fundamentally disagree with, will compromise their principles to the point of evacuating them, perhaps with no higher end than to have some share in the plums of office. There is what has been called the House of Commons view of life, which may be, as I have indicated, a virtue in getting the practical thing done, but which may be disloyalty to truth, selling one's soul for gain, like Judas with his thirty pieces of silver.

Besides this compromise of worldly-wisdom, there is what may be called the compromise of despair. This is common among the intellectual, who think the many-headed multitude can never rise to their level. They quote St. Paul's statement that he was as a Jew to Jews

and as one without the law to the heathen to justify their attitude of holding back truth from the people. There was a principle largely accepted by the early Church, but much older than the Church, called Reserve, or Economy of Truth. It meant that everything need not be declared at once to beginners, in case they might be discouraged. Much was held in reserve to be revealed gradually, as the pupil advanced in power to understand and appropriate. This of course is an obvious necessity in all education. To start beginners with the higher Mathematics, before they were taught anything of arithmetic and plane geometry, would be absurd and would certainly discourage anybody from ever starting the subject.

But the principle, however useful and necessary, is a little dangerous, especially in religion. It may create an inside group who are supposed to know the inner mysteries, and the great mass of outsiders who are not fit to enter the innermost court of the temple where the secret lies and are hopelessly left outside. But in the early Church this principle of reserve was used not to exclude converts, but to lead them on to the fulness of truth. Some modern

exponents of reserve use the principle with an intellectual and moral arrogance, that this people who knoweth not the law are accursed and must remain accursed. They dissemble their opinions and are all things to all men to leave them as they are. St. Paul became as a Jew to Jews, but not that he might leave them Jews. He became as one outside the law to pagans, but not to leave them pagans. He sought with all his soul to make them Christians, to lift them to what he thought was a higher level. Some modern economists of truth justify themselves by St. Paul's example, but their purpose in compromising what they believe true is to let the heathen stay heathen. There is a tremendous distinction between the reserve of wise leaders who seek to avoid wounding tender consciences, and the reserve of time-servers who cloak truth really to avoid discomfort to themselves. The old reserve meant giving enough truth to prepare the mind of learners for more. The modern compromise of some means refusing truth to leave error in possession of the field. It is an insult to our intelligence to compare this cowardly compromise with the wise sort illustrated by

St. Paul, who was consumed by passionate conviction, and was all things to all men that by any means he might gain some to leave the old and adventure the new with Christ.

V

There are other false forms of compromise, which only need to be mentioned to display their falseness. There is the compromise of cowardice, which weakly gives in at every crisis and never displays the courage of conviction. There is the compromise of indifference, to which one course is as good as another, because it does not care one way or another. All these false types of compromise hide under the shadow of the legitimate sort, where a man concedes points he thinks important in order to get something practicable done. Even here it is not always easy to see where duty lies. Take the case of an honest politician who has principles he holds dear. If he joins a party, he is compelled to make concessions, to give in to prejudices, to modify what he believes to be truth, to make compromise in order to work along with others. Here he runs the

risk of being false to truth and to conscience. If on the other hand he remains a free-lance, owning no allegiance of party, he is swept aside as a hopeless irreconcilable, and loses what influence he might exert.

It comes to this, that there are obvious limits to compromise. A principle can be so truncated, or so pared away—here a little, there a little—that nothing worth contending for remains. To abandon principle for the sake of the practical is sometimes to lose both. No wise man wants to be a voice crying in the wilderness if he has anything to say. He wants his message to be understood, and accepted by men, and applied in some way to life. But if his voice is ever to be attuned to the common note, if he is always to be all things to all men, he may end in having nothing distinctive to say at all. One may be so anxious to explain his message that he explains it away. He can be so much all things to all men that he is nothing to anybody. It is because there is a Gospel of the ages that we can speak of the Gospel to this age. It is because there is a timeless element of truth that it can be interpreted to this time.

The limits set to compromise of all sorts are the limits set by truth, to which we must be true. St. Paul has another phrase, which gives the principle which saves us from all selfish and unworthy compromise, and which yet shows the place for true compromise. It is the great word, "Speaking the truth in love." St. Paul could be a Jew to Jew, pagan to pagan, all things to all men without loss of integrity, because the driving, inspiring motive of his whole life was love. Loveless truth is not truth, and truth which is spoken and acted in love will not cease to be truth when love shapes it and uses it for the good of men.

Chapter IX

PEACE AND WAR

I

The problem suggested in the treatment of Compromise reaches its most acute form to a Christian today in the position he must take regarding peace. There is no difficulty in stating the Christian view of war and peace, or for that part the view of ordinary sanity and common sense. There never was a wise and good man who did not hate war. Even the great soldiers, when they were good, have hated war. It is the most insensate and stupid method imaginable to settle the difficulties that emerge among men. It is an insult to human intellect to provide no other method of deciding disputes than brute force. Voltaire called war the greatest of all crimes, and remarked how every aggressor colours his crime with the pretext of justice. With his brilliant irony he says, "It is forbidden to kill; and so all murderers are punished, unless they murder

in large numbers and to the sound of trumpets."

Our age is one of misery and wretchedness, because so much of value has been shattered by war, and our lives are still lived under its shadow. We are hag-ridden by apprehension, and we cannot escape the haunting fear that the bottom may fall out of our civilisation and plunge us again into barbarism. This is one hopeful sign of our time, that men everywhere dread the plunge. Even the peoples who are assiduously taught to believe in it have a sinking fear of the ghastly obscenity of modern war. The rhetorical dictators themselves, who glorify it in speech, have uneasy thoughts of the possible results. But this psychology of fear is also one of our dangers. To rid themselves of it and shake off the blighting, frustrating terror, men may in desperation prefer the evils they only imagine to the evils they know.

To condemn war it is not necessary to paint with lurid colours the nameless atrocities of the stricken field, or to try to depict the abomination of desolation which modern war must leave in its trail. The frightfulness of war grows by geometrical progression, as men increase the

instruments of destruction, and as they perfect weapons that formerly could not even be dreamed of. In 1878 General von Hartmann, advocating terrorism as a necessary military principle, wrote: "It is a gratuitous illusion to suppose that modern war does not demand far more brutality, far more violence, and an action far more general than was formerly the case." The war to which he then looked forward was waged with more brutality and violence and with an action far more general than even he could dream. The next war, to which men of his kidney look forward, may easily transcend in brutality and in scope that which we sometimes call the World War. It is idle to attempt to imagine its horror and shame.

Apart from the bloody business of the stricken field, there are many other effects which make the state of war hateful to a sensitive mind. It clouds society with hatred and revenge, and lets loose passions black as hell. It is soul-deadening and heart-searing. In war we begin to think of it as a kind of military game, with strategic moves, and easily forget the human side. The pawns of the strategy are men, and the worst victims are women and children.

The real harvest of the battle-field is not the glory or the gain, but the sheaves of the dead, the tears of mourning hearts, the ashes of homesteads, and all the unspeakable pain and loss and sorrow.

One of the baneful effects of war is the race-hatred engendered, the unreasoning enmities of men, the spirit of insolent contempt in the conqueror and of revenge in the conquered. At all times we are beset with temptation to race prejudice, but the stress of war inflames it to passion. The deterioration of character which accompanies war is evident in every class of society. In spite of the self-sacrifice often so gloriously displayed and the heroic virtues which often shine like a light on the very battle-field, only a sentimentalist can think of warfare ennobling human nature. And after it is all over, it is long and arduous work to soften the asperities, and kill the enmities, and root out the hatred, which are some of the hellish brood of war.

II

If it should need few words to express the hatefulness of war, it should need fewer still to

describe the Christian attitude to peace. Down through the ages comes the pathetic cry from mourning hearts, "Give peace in our time O Lord, because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only Thou O God." The heart of prophetic religion is that men should do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with God; and it is obvious that only in peace can men practise this. How can men enforce justice at the point of a bayonet, and show love of mercy by dropping bombs on women and children, and walk humbly with God either in victory or defeat? Even now without actual outbreak of war, in the paralysis of fears and nightmare of hate afflicting mankind, with the nations drawn up almost in battle array, normal life and normal religion are impossible. The Christmas message of peace on earth, good-will toward men has been accepted by all Christians as expressing the spirit and purpose of Christ's life and work. His summary of the law of human relations is accepted by all disciples, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." His beatitude of the peacemakers, who are called the children of God, reveals His deepest thought of man and His purpose for

man. The Christian conscience is awake to the sin and shame of war, and passionately desires to see the establishment of peace on a secure foundation.

There are attitudes and policies which all Christians can share in and adopt, whatever differences they may have on the question whether war is ever justifiable. One thing the whole Church can do insistently and persistently is to seek to disarm the minds of men, and create the atmosphere in which peace can thrive. Consistent Christian teaching on the real values of life can take away the false glory and glamour of war. Gibbon says, "Trajan was ambitious of fame, and as long as mankind shall continue to bestow more liberal applause on their destroyers than on their benefactors, the thirst of military glory will ever be the vice of the most exalted characters." Much has happened since Trajan's time, and even since Gibbon's time, to give a new revaluation of war, and to squeeze most of the glory out of it. We no longer think of it as romantic, like a tournament of jousting knights, or a spectacular parade of dazzling uniforms and flashing banners and blare of trumpets. We see

drab khaki and the mud of trenches, and think of it as a tragic business and unspeakably stupid. All Christians acknowledge that war is evil, and that is an immense advance.

The fact is that modern war is a new thing in the world's history, so completely new that none of the old descriptions or ideas of it apply. It used to be looked on as the business of professional soldiers, who fought under certain more or less accepted rules; and a body of international law had gradually grown, which attempted to restrain and even humanise war. All that has gone to the discard, and there seems no way to mitigate the atrocities or limit the scope of war's ravage. There has ceased to be a distinction between combatants and non-combatants. Soldiers were in uniform, for one thing to distinguish them from the civilian population, in order that they might be protected. Today it looks as if the first blow on the declaration of war, or even before declaration, would fall on cities and towns. Mass murder of civilians would seem to be the first military order of the day. The first weapon to be used is to pour poison gas and incendiary bombs from the air, in the attempt

to break the nerve and destroy the morale of the whole civilian population.

We have to dismiss from our minds all the picturesque and romantic ideas imbedded in our language. The gentlemanly phrases about 'unsheathing the sword' are ludicrously out of date in a world where people are being taught the use of gas-masks and dug-outs and how to burrow like rabbits. It is silly to talk of the chivalry and heroism of arms in the face of the obscene butchery and bloody savagery with which modern war menaces us. Chivalry and heroism there will always be, thank God, wherever man exists, but it is high time we got rid of the poetry and pageantry and romantic glamour associated in our minds with military prowess. Also, we talk of winning a war, when we know now that, win or lose, in the end of the day there are no victors. When war means, not an expedition to some distant area of strife, but a world-conflagration, the only sure prediction is the collapse of our whole civilisation. This almost dramatic change of the character of modern war is the justification of the pacifist claim that the time has come for the complete and absolute renunciation of war.

III

It should not be beyond the wit of man to devise ways and means of ending the terror, and ridding the world of what is at once an offence to sanity and an outrage to the Christian conscience. But it is here we find a cleavage of opinion that threatens to split the Church asunder. It would be a disaster if this difference became so inflamed that it ends in schism, and thereby weakens the unity of the Christian front against war, and disables the present endeavour to establish peace on the earth. It is good to keep in mind that to all sincere Christians the abolition of war has become a supreme Christian duty. Also, we should remember how much there is in common between the two parties in the controversy. This common ground was well expressed in the Report of a Special Committee approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1937:

"It is well to put on record and keep in mind the long distance which all Christians, pacifist and non-pacifist, can travel together. All are agreed on the hatefulness of war, and on its

inadequacy as a means of securing justice and the enduring solution of any conflict of international interests. All are agreed that anything that savours of oppression, aggression, and denial of rights is contrary to the mind of Christ; and that any nation today which decides to be its own judge in its own cause, and which refuses to use every means of conciliation and arbitration, is acting contrary to the mind of Christ. All are agreed that war in its effects on individuals is an unspeakable outrage on human personality, and that for nations, even though they be but partially Christian, to resort to arms in order to achieve a national advantage or in obedience to imperialistic demands is to do despite to the very foundations of the rule of God. . . . All are agreed that if the instruments which have been drawn up since the last war were honestly applied—the League of Nations, with its covenant amended if need be, the Permanent Court of International Justice, and the Pact of Paris, to mention no others—war, as we have known it, would be banished from off the earth. All are agreed that until war is banished the kindly blessings of peace are hindered from coming to fruition, and that it is contrary to the will of God that men should spend in war, and in preparation for war, that wealth of the earth's products which God gave for the sustenance and uplift of man."

It is worth noting that such a declaration would have been impossible only a few decades ago. It is a sign of immense progress that the very thought of war creates such moral distress today. Not long ago few would have questioned the right of a nation to declare war, if it thought fit, for any purpose it pleased. Few would have denied that nations might resort to arms in order to achieve a national advantage. It was taken for granted that a nation could wage war on another when it chose, and that conquest gave it right to the land, and that the population went with the land and became subject. This monstrous doctrine is still held in places and formerly was tacitly assented to by all nations, but is now recognised by the Christian conscience to be monstrous, and democracy at last may pluck up courage to denounce it. The great international peace movement had its source and inspiration in Christianity. More and more through the centuries men had felt the contrast between our faith and our national practice. Never before has the movement made such rapid progress as it has in the last few years.

IV

The crisis in the peace ranks today arises from the fact that a group, who for want of a better name are called pacifists, assert bluntly that a Christian can never sanction war under any circumstances whatever, nor take any part in it. Of course it ought to be said that not all pacifists are such because they are supremely and superbly Christian. It is only right to say that some of them seem to base their thinking on a stark materialism, judging life by the purely physical standard of comfort and well-being. Pain to them is the only real evil of life. Some of them belong to the specially sheltered classes, whose one thought is to stay under the lee. They are hangers-on of the capitalist system, with enough inherited investments to shelter them in normal times. They are individualists of the first water, even when they call themselves socialists; for they have no conception of society as a whole. Others are the fruit of our social injustice, who have been so crushed by the industrial machine that they have little sense of social obligation and no thought of duty to the State. Their dreary

lot has poisoned them with resentment, so that it is little wonder that the State should be to them only the policeman to enforce the order, without which capital would not be safe. We cannot escape responsibility for the system which produces them; and democracy needs peace to get on with its programme of social betterment.

But the class we are concerned with in this discussion consists of the real idealists, who are the driving force of the whole movement, and who in many ways are the salt of the earth. Whatever view we take of their practical position, we must have sympathy with their ideal and indeed must believe in it. There may be a pacifism born of cowardice, but here we have clean courage without stint or measure. To them it is the way of the Cross, and by pacifism they mean overcoming evil with good, if need be laying down their lives that good may triumph. They are uncompromising in their position that under no circumstances can they as Christian men take any part in war or give it any support, and they logically call upon their nation to disarm. They will not even distinguish between just and unjust war, of defence or aggression. Or rather, to

be quite fair, they do distinguish, but hold that even a just war does more evil than good, arouses the brute in man, and swamps the world with bestiality and mad passion. For whatever cause, whether it be fought in defence or aggression, whether on behalf of international justice or for national aggrandisement, war is alike unhallowed. There is no question of choosing the lesser of two evils; it is all and always accursed.

This seems to put us in the region of absolute principle, where no question and no compromise are possible. But such an idealist, unless he refuses to think, must acknowledge that his attitude allows the aggressor nation to work its will on innocent folk unhampered. He must acknowledge that it is a terrible evil that the innocent should be trampled on by the insolence of brute force. His position of assent to that means that, evil as it is, he thinks it a lesser evil than the other evil of opposing the aggressor. So that he too is really choosing what seems to him the lesser of two evils. But that also means that we have left the region of absolute principle, and are discussing relative values such as the lesser of two evils. If

another says that to resist the aggressor nation by force is to him the lesser evil, he is making his decision on the very same principle as the pacifist. He may be as fine a Christian idealist as the other. There is no ground for either contemning the other as less Christian in his outlook or in his principle of judgment. They both are choosing what they decide to be the lesser of two admitted evils, and as the world is, that is what we mostly have to do in all our decisions.

We have always made a distinction between a war of aggression and a war of defence. The trouble is that once war begins, every nation is convinced that it is no aggressor but is engaged in a righteous struggle in self-defence. It is said, therefore, that there is no way of defining aggression; but that is no longer true. It can be, and has been, defined. The nations that signed the Kellogg Pact renounced war as an instrument of policy, and pledged themselves to rational methods of arbitration as a means of securing international justice. One great thing the Pact did was to define aggression, so that the citizens of a country can no longer be deceived, or deceive themselves. The aggressor is the State which refuses to submit

the case to arbitration. That is very simple, and would be effective if we could say that the Pact really existed. But the definition remains, and commends itself to the reason and conscience of men. In the Lambeth Resolution there is an excellent statement, which is the fruit of the Kellogg Pact, and which all Christians surely must accept: "The Christian Church in every nation should refuse to countenance any war in regard to which the Government of its own country has not declared its willingness to submit the matter in dispute to arbitration or conciliation." That disposes of the objection that we can never be sure where the stigma of aggression can be placed. The tragedy today is that there are nations which have been so taught and drilled that they seem to believe in war, incredible as it may seem to us; and unfortunately the Churches are largely national, and with one great exception the voice of each Church is not heard beyond the frontier of the country.

V

Surely the great question for us of the democracies is, not a general discussion about the

evil of war and the blessing of peace, but the practical situation with which we are called to deal. The one question surely is how we are to preserve peace in the crisis of our present world, and save civilisation from collapse. Many Christians, who loathe war and condemn it as contrary to the mind of Christ, think that to assert that under no circumstances will they oppose aggressive war is to prevent the chance of peace being preserved. Bacon quoted Virgil's saying that it troubleth not the wolf how many the sheep be. The more sheep the better for the lupine force that would harry the fold. These Christians feel that to stand aside and let evil ravage at will, while they wash their hands of all concern for justice, would be to play the part of Pilate in the crisis of Jesus' fate.

What many Christians are longing for today is some practical way to let their influence be felt to ensure peace, or at least advance the cause they have at heart. They are not thinking merely of how they can keep their own conscience clear of the guilt of war. They want to see their country play a constructive part in some effective plan that would give the world

collective security. They would be pacifists, if they thought that would end war. They, however, feel sure that as the actual world is at this stage, pacifism would only precipitate war. They may be wrong in this, of course, but they honestly believe that pacifism as advocated now would only rob the world of its chance of peace. They are longing anxiously to take the next practical step, even if it is the lesser of two evils. They believe that international war can only be eliminated by international law, and they are prepared to enforce on their own nation its share of responsibility.

It is true that the Christian ideal for men and for nations is love, and if men followed the Christian way and loved each other, war would cease. But it is not cynical to say that it is easier to stop war by a practical plan than to get men to love each other. People used to say that duelling was inevitable, that men of honour must always be prepared to fight a duel, and that the Church must go on with its task of presenting the Christian ideal, and when men lived by that ideal and loved each other, duelling would cease. Men do not love each other overmuch now, but in most civilised

countries they do not fight duels. Private war has ceased, and combatants have their disputes adjudicated in courts of law. War among nations will cease when they too are compelled to submit their case to law instead of to the dread arbitrament of arms. We have still to go on presenting and commending the ultimate Christian ideal, but all must admit that to end war as a practical achievement would be an immense step forward towards that ideal. As a fact, the intransigent pacifist position may have the effect of evaporating the ideal altogether;. for it assumes that there is nothing to choose between two sides of a human conflict, between a predatory nation out for loot and its helpless victim. Are we to sigh that the Christian ideal is impossible except as a personal gesture of sacrifice, or are we to seek to apply it wherever and whenever we can?

VI

This problem of war happens to be the persistent one of the moment, but it is not different in principle from the problems that emerge in every department of human conduct. In

industry the same problem faces the Christian business man. He is called to apply the standards of his religion to his business, but he finds that he must accommodate his ideal to actual conditions, and he finds that he is a trustee for others in the conduct of his business. A man may do as a private Christian what would be immoral for him to do as, for example, a minister of State responsible for the safety and welfare of the people. He may sacrifice himself, but he may not sacrifice the nation in his charge, unless it too is prepared to sacrifice itself. I may give away legally and morally all my money, but if I am trustee of a widow's fund I may not even risk losing it by investing it in projects where I might rightly invest my own. We cannot live by precepts and the letter of the law.

The problem of peace and war is only an illustration of the whole problem of the Christian life, which is to relate the ultimate motive of the law of love to all the facts and situations of human existence. On the one hand, we have the law of love with its insistent implications to every sphere of life. On the other hand, we have the stubborn reality, the dead-weight of

opposition to good, material forces ever thwarting the highest. The law of love is ever met by the fact of sin. There is no simple and easy way out of our great problems, and there is no short-cut to the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. We believe that in Christianity lies the solution of the world's problems, and the assuagement of the world's needs. We have to go on sincerely and resolutely applying the Christian ideal as best we can to the actual situations of life. This always implies compromise of some sort, as any practical plan we may devise must come short of the ideal. What we have to assure ourselves is that the decision we make and the practical plan we adopt are in line with the ultimate ideal.

This compromise sometimes seems a tragic dilemma, and often means a painful tension for mind and conscience, but it is inescapable. St. Paul knew that men and women stood alike as human souls, that in Christ there is "neither male nor female," but for practical reasons due to the place and time he legislated for women in the Church at Corinth that they may not act like men. He knew that Christianity destroyed the basis of slavery, that in Christ

there was "neither bond nor free," but he sent Onesimus, a converted runaway slave, back to his master, though it almost broke his heart to do it. He did everything that wisdom and love could do to soften the blow, wrote a special letter to the slave's master,[1] and in a letter to the Church of the city commended his brother Onesimus to them [2]—but he sent the slave back to slavery. There was no other way out at the time. At that stage of human development, to have encouraged slaves to revolt would have meant a servile war, the bloodiest type of war in history, as all class wars have been. It would have fastened the yoke on the necks of the slaves more firmly and cruelly than ever.

In an issue like this, so difficult and so acute, all that anyone can do is to state the case as he sees it without acrimony and without reflections on the motives of others who disagree. Personally I cannot believe that the Christian way today is for single Christians to declare beforehand how they will meet historical situations, which in the providence of God they will be called on to deal with as wisely and

[1] Epistle to Philemon. [2] Colossians iv. 9.

as devotedly as they can. If they believe that their country is honestly seeking to establish peace, they may be meanwhile weakening and possibly disrupting their country in a time so critical. I know that I could thrill myself to the marrow of my bones if at the psychological time I publicly declared that before God I would give no support at any time to any war, that I abjured the accursed thing, and never again would have lot or part in it. That would be to me taking the easy way, by no means the way of the Cross. To me it would be mere emotional release, by which I would escape the strain and tension of conscience and the burden on mind and heart which our tragic age implies.

Meanwhile we can all go on disarming our own minds, ridding them of suspicion and hatred and arrogance. We can do our part in disarming the minds of men the world over, and in removing the causes of war. We can work for the creation of a society of nations, which will secure justice, and establish law, and give a place where the conscience of the world can on occasion speak. We can insist that our own nation must give up any claim

to be its own judge in its own cause, must submit its disputes to arbitration and process of law. We must go on doing justly, and loving mercy, and creating the atmosphere in which peace can exist. We can work and pray with all men of good-will everywhere to bring nearer the Kingdom of God.

Chapter X

PATRIOTISM

I

It is hard to define a nation. The bond that makes a nation is not one language—the Swiss have three. Nor is it one lineage and blood—Great Britain has Celt and Saxon and others. The United States is composed of many races and diverse breeds. It lies somewhere in common history and common loyalties, and a common allegiance. But love of nation seems an instinct deep rooted in the human heart, and it transfers itself to the very land. The prophet Jeremiah told the people not to weep for the dead king Josiah, but to weep sore for his son the exiled king. The pathos of his exile is that "he shall return no more, nor see his native country." These words touch us with an intolerable sadness, because they suggest some irreparable loss. Those who have seen an emigrant ship full of dispossessed folk, leaving port for a foreign shore, tell us that

the sights and sounds were heart-breaking. Poor exiles, they shall return no more, nor see their native country.

It is true that the family is and must be the social unit. If all other human institutions collapsed, the family could keep the race going. But it would be at the best a bare subsistence. For all that we mean by civilisation the family has to be related to other families—and so we arrive at the larger unit we call the nation. All sorts of problems and dangers emerge, as the smaller groups coalesce into the larger group of the State. There must be government, and that may become centralised tyranny. The reason why people ever submit to it is that instinctively they feel that the cost of government is cheaper than the cost of chaos. The emotional exaltation of patriotism helps to mould the component parts into one unified whole, and also helps to keep bad government longer in the saddle than would otherwise be. So true is this that there are many critics of patriotism who see nothing but its evil results.

Nationalism plays such a part in the unholy mess of our world today that it is no wonder many idealists are denouncing patriotism.

Certainly undue over-emphasised nationalism is the greatest menace to civilisation today. Everything tends to encourage it. Even our education stresses it. History, for example, is taught from the angle of each separate nation. There are even students who know nothing but American history, as on the other side of the ocean some know nothing but British history. Of course this has its good points, as the best place to begin in education is where you are, and the man who has learned nothing of the story of his own land can know little worth while of any other. But this emphasis on national history distorts the whole picture.

The situation is a terrible discouragement to all broad-minded lovers of mankind. We had been developing what we rejoiced to call the international mind. There was a republic of letters, which included all of like tastes over the wide world. Scholarship, science, art had no national frontiers. The 'humanities' was the word we used to describe the common learning and the achievements of the mind of man. A work of art, a discovery of truth, an invention became the property of the world. Even commerce was creating a world con-

sciousness. England bought everything the earth produced, and sold her own products from China to Peru. Men were beginning to think of themselves as citizens of the world, without ceasing to be intelligent patriots. They naturally wanted their own country to prosper, but did not think that this had to be at the expense of other countries. Everything seemed moving, if not to the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world, at least to a condition of more settled peace and good-will.

Instead of that we have everywhere a narrowing outlook, a reversion to a state where the life of man is broken up in rival groups. Increasing enmity and tension appear among peoples who would normally be friendly. Even the old republic of letters is smashed, as nations seek to be self-contained. They even control thought, so as to make everything within the life of the State nationalist. Patriotism is glorified till it looks as if a true patriot must hate every country but his own. So far has this over-emphasised nationalism gone, that many sincere lovers of their kind conclude that patriotism is itself a curse and a false ideal. They would root it out and enthrone in its

place cosmopolitanism, which would teach us to think of ourselves as only citizens of the world.

This seems a much nobler mental attitude. It certainly has a more gracious outlook, and aims at the time when war will be no more and the arts of peace will flourish. One who has lived in different countries with an open mind and a hospitable heart despises some of the types of patriotism common. He knows that no one race has a monopoly of the virtues or the graces. He knows that all the races have contributed to the sum of human achievement. He meets beauty in all lands, and finds excellence wherever he turns. He is inclined to spurn narrow, sectional, national sentiment, and embrace the wide role of a citizen of the world.

II

In spite of the attraction of this point of view as compared with a narrow self-assertive patriotism, there is danger in the beautiful sentiment that enshrines itself in cosmopolitanism. It can spread itself out so thin that there is little but mud. You can be so concerned

about the world at large that you lose all thought of the duties and responsibilities of the actual relations of normal life. You can be so detached from what lies around you that it amounts to plain selfishness. There is an idealism about the far places of the earth that shuts the eyes to the obvious duties about the near and the present. Your mouth may be so full of universal brotherhood that your heart has no room for an actual brother close at hand. A man may be so concerned about large vague social schemes that he has no thought for smaller groups like the family which bred and reared him. He may be so interested in an abstraction like the Kingdom of Heaven that he has no care for the Church, which is the great instrument in the world to realise that ideal. If there is a narrow-minded patriot who hates every country but his own, there can be a broad-minded cosmopolitan who seems to love every country but his own.

Also, cosmopolitanism kicks against the pricks. It ignores the great fact of history and experience which we call patriotism. It is universal in one form or another, because it is rooted in the human heart. The literature of

all the peoples of the world proves it. The poetry of every nation reveals the fact that here we are dealing with a human passion.

> Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
> Who never to himself hath said,
> This is my own, my native land !

I could fill pages quoting from the poetry of every country this exalted sentiment of love for the father-land or mother-land—Germany, France and all the rest. America is called a new country, but she is old enough to have produced songs, and anthems, and hymns expressing the old love of country.

> America ! America !
> God shed His grace on thee,
> And crown thy good with brotherhood,
> From sea to shining sea.

Let us be realist enough to admit that we are dealing here with a universal human passion.

What are we to do with it? Must we try to crush it, and uproot it as in itself an evil and wicked influence? The type of nationalism which is a menace to civilisation is undoubtedly evil, and we can see why exaggerated nationalism inevitably becomes anti-Christian. To see that, all we have to do is to try and place

Jesus in the nationalistic rule of an absolute state. Of course He would be a subversive force to be suppressed or eliminated. But the corruption of a human quality or of an institution is no argument for uprooting the quality or the institution. It is a very good argument for correcting and amending it. If patriotism is a human passion practically universal, so universal and so fundamentally human that it cannot be strangled, what are we to do with it? It must be trained and disciplined and used for high ends.

III

How can this be done? Well, the first thing to do is to acknowledge that it is a *human* passion. It is not something peculiar to us and our kind. All men have it. It is not confined to us and our country. The trouble about exaggerated nationalism is that it breeds a patriotism that thinks itself exceptional, of a fervour unknown elsewhere, with claims and privileges unexampled. Of course Japanese love Japan, but Chinese are not supposed to be capable of loving China in the same way!

It can only be an inferior emotion, different from the heart-stirring thrill of the real feeling. Nobody denies the intense patriotism of Germans, but nobody else should love their land as fervently! If we remember that patriotism is a human passion, if we never forget that what we claim for ourselves we must gladly grant to others, it will affect our foreign policy in fundamental ways. It will prevent us from being overbearing and insolent. It should also help us to build the new organisation of society, which can give us collective security by free nations making their contribution to the general welfare. We who believe in patriotism for ourselves must grant the same claim and privilege to others.

Another way in which we must train and discipline patriotism is by turning the tremendous power of it into nobler channels. We must seek to make the nation we love even more worthy of our love. The true patriot will love the best in his country and seek the best for her. There have never been more intense patriots than the Hebrew prophets. Palestine meant more to them than country; it meant religion. It meant more than home and native

land; for God was associated with the actual locality they called country. Palestine and Jerusalem were more than land and capital—they were the holy land and the holy city, because there God had His habitation. So the prophets strove to conserve their national existence with a fierce patriotism. Jeremiah expressed more than the natural pathos of a Jewish exiled king when he called on the people to weep sore that he shall return no more nor see his native country.

This same Jeremiah, who thought that was almost the limit of desolation, was willing to see the people he loved go out into the bitterness of the exile, willing to see them ground under the heel of oppression, that they might become worthy of being loved. Because he loved the best in Israel, he wanted the nation brought back to nobler life at any cost. It is as if I, a Scot, loved Scotland so much that I was willing to see the dear land despoiled, and the people lose liberty and all earthly possession, that at long last one day Scotland might be nearer the land of my dream, and the soul of Scotland be purified till it was a treasure the world dare not lose. Ah, dear God! ask

me not even to imagine that at such a cost. But at least it gives me an idea of what true patriotism can mean, compared to the blatant vulgar thing the modern sort seems to be. So we, if we are to be true patriots, must make ourselves more worthy of our heritage. We must give ourselves humbly and whole-heartedly to serve the land to which we owe so much.

IV

One other thing has to be said in defence of true patriotism, namely that its opposite, which we have been calling cosmopolitanism, mistakes the real nature of the evolutionary process. The whole process works out from the lesser to the greater. Man's interests widen in enlarging circles from the self, the family, the clan, or the village, the city, the nation. Each step is a stage in the social evolution of man. The cosmopolitan is right in asserting that we cannot stop with the nation any more than we can stop with the family. He is right in insisting that we must move out to a wider circle still, which must take in the whole world. Where he is wrong is in assuming that we pass

through the stage of nationality, and leave it as if it had never been.

As a matter of fact, we never do that in any stage of human progress. When we move out to a larger circle, we never depart from the lesser group and say eternal good-bye to it. When a man grows big enough not to be completely concerned with that sweet gentleman self, to be interested in even a small group like the family, we do not expect him to lose all interest in self. Even as a member of the family he would still be important, at least to himself. When he extends his interest to some larger social group, that does not mean that he is for ever done with the family. That would be like kicking over the ladder by which he had climbed. Just as he himself and the others make up the family, the family is the social unit that builds up the nation. So if we can reach the stage of a family of nations, which is the cosmopolitan ideal and my ideal, it does not mean that we depart from and neglect the nation of which we are a part. Rather the opposite. Only as a nation has a distinctive life can it make a distinctive contribution. The true ideal is not a vague and

hazy cosmopolitanism, but a real family of nations in which each nation counts. In that family there will be older and younger, stronger and weaker, richer and poorer, but all with a contribution to make, all with rights and duties as members of the family.

So patriotism remains as a valid and even an inevitable motive. To try to destroy and strangle it would be futile. We must seek to make it Christian, give it ethical content, and use it for the highest human ends of our day. All the forms of society in which we are enmeshed affect us—the family, the industrial system, school and Church, all the group relations which make up so large a part of our life. The larger unity of the nation of which we are members has its claims on us. How could we escape the demand for loyalty here, when every other social relation has its loyalty to which we willingly bend? The nation is a bundle of life in which we are inextricably bound. It is no use contemning patriotism and trying to eradicate it. The true way is to educate it, and moralise it, and consecrate it, that it may serve the best ends of mankind.

The religious ideal is needed to save every

human relation—to keep the family pure, to preserve politics from corruption, to safeguard industry, and redeem life from selfishness. Only religion can control patriotism, and save it from the hideous excesses so prevalent in some of its modern forms; and religion points the way to that wider union of a brotherhood of nations. We feel that this is the world's greatest need today amid the warring, snarling races of mankind. It is for us to keep true to this larger ideal in spite of all discouragement and failure. To give up now in despair would be to rob the world of its hope. We will not love our nation less but all the more, as we see her take her share in the burden and the glory of the future.

Chapter XI

LOYALTY

I

The words loyal and loyalist have been so misused that in some quarters a natural prejudice against them has arisen. Some avoid the use of the word loyalty from an unconscious distaste for its misuse, as Dr. Johnson, a stubborn patriot if ever there was one, defined patriotism in his Dictionary as the last refuge of a scoundrel. It is a thousand pities that great words like patriotism and loyalty should be under a cloud. The quality of loyalty is one without which human nature would be permanently impoverished and social life would be impossible. Modern dictators get their unparalleled power by their skilful appeal to the inherent loyalty of men. It is worth while considering its place and function in human life.

Loyalty is a beautiful word, with an even more beautiful idea behind it. The English word is not very old, but the idea is as old

as man. The word 'loyal' occurs in Shakespeare, who used nearly all the words there were, but not at all in the authorised version of the Bible. The word when it first appeared in English meant fidelity to one's oath, or love, or service. Later it was narrowed to mean allegiance to the established government of one's country, which is still its most common use. This gets embodied after the usual human fashion in a symbol—as in England loyalty to the throne or in America to the flag, both symbols carrying the thought of home, liberty, law and order, and all the institutions of the country.

The word seems to be coming back to its first meaning, broadening out to all relationships, like its Scots form 'leal,' faithful. It means the fidelity one owes to law, upholding lawful authority, true to one's allegiance. But it is broader in its application than that, meaning being true to anyone or anything to which one owes fidelity, such as husband and wife, business associates to each other, friend to friend, and especially true to a cause to which one is pledged, or an institution in which one believes.

It is not perhaps the first of the virtues—the

place which should probably go to courage—but it is the most winsome. The reason why courage may claim first place is that without it all other virtues are maimed or impossible. A man may believe in truth, but at a pinch without courage he will lie. He may believe in justice, but without courage he will temporise or assent to injustice if things get difficult. Of course the virtues are never completely separate. The loyal man cannot remain so, if he is not brave; and the great motive to courage is loyalty. You need to have something to be brave for.

Loyalty is often mixed up in the popular mind with associations that lower its position in the scale of virtues. We think of the loyalty demanded from a gang of bandits, honour among thieves. Or again, the language of loyalty has been too martial, as if its finest triumph was on the battle-field, dying for country. The true man, if die he must, asks only to die under the banner of the cause he serves. But we have thought of loyalty too much as a matter of war-like glory—the knight of mediaeval romance, Horatius on the bridge, a regiment holding the line to the last man, or

the tradition of the 'Birkenhead drill' in the British navy. We think of it as one of the military virtues, because they are dramatic and spectacular, and because, alas, war has played such a vast part in history. But it is an unfortunate association of ideas. We are inclined to lose sight of the fact that loyalty is for all, and for all life. There are countless cases in civil life where the heroic virtue has been displayed—the engineer who went to certain death to turn off steam in a crippled ship; the fireman who risked life to rescue a child from a blazing house; the telephone girl who stuck to her post as the flood from a broken dam swept down, that she might warn villages and towns below; the miners who go down into the pit at the hazard of life to save their comrades after an accident. These are as dramatic and blood-stirring illustrations of the virtue as any exploit of war. Even these are spectacular and exceptional, and tend to make us neglect the common loyalties and to make us exclude ourselves from the common appeal. Human life is made up of loyalties, and there is no life which does not afford opportunities for their exercise.

II

It is enough by way of definition to say that loyalty is devotion to a cause, that which binds us to a group for a common end. The fidelity of a gangster to his gang is loyalty. To begin with, any cause may evoke faithful and devoted allegiance to itself. So, loyalty is one of the fundamental social virtues. Without it in some measure, and kindred virtues, there could be no human society at all. We need not be afraid of it dying out, unless man dies off the face of the planet. It has the survival-value of social necessity. It is implanted so deeply in human nature, that men must find something to which to be loyal in order to make life worth while. There is a common wail today that our whole ethical foundation is shaken, and that morals are thrown to the discard by this generation. It is even said that there is a complete breakdown of our old morality, and that we are in a new ethical era. Some of this lament is sensational, and some of it is from muddled thinking.

To the normal man the virtues remain, and they are the same virtues as of old. No new

ethical era can dethrone them and hope to remain an era. Qualities like courage, loyalty, honour, probity, truth, justice are the basis of human society. They have their roots so deep in history, and experience, and life, that society could not exist without them. The world could not even do its ordinary business without some of them. They are the inherited wisdom and ancestral experience of the race. They are obviously essential to the survival of the community. For example, any tribe or group, however primitive, would disappear, if its members had not courage, had no loyalty, and were not prepared to sacrifice themselves to protect the group. To strike at loyalty and similar virtues is to undermine the basis of human society. Society could not exist without them as an ideal, and also as practised however imperfectly. No civilisation has ever for long sapped the foundations of these old-fashioned virtues and survived.

So, when we ask what the value of loyalty is, we mention first its social value. If loyalty is devotion to a cause, as defined, obviously there would not be a cause at all, if nobody was loyal to it. So far, we have made no dis-

tinction between causes, whether good, or less good, or bad. Loyalty of some sort makes society of any kind possible; for there could not be groups if their adherents were not faithful to them. It is devotion to a cause which makes the cause.

Then, there is its personal value; for devotion to a cause also makes the man. Whatever the cause, loyalty to it means a stiffening of fibre and a wider vision. Sometimes the cause is not worthy of the boundless devotion it receives, but it has this value, that it is at least for something bigger than any personal or selfish end. For a man to devote himself to a cause lifts him out of smaller things and gives life a unity of purpose, and by it he often achieves a personal dignity otherwise impossible. In addition to the service a loyal man can do to a cause, there is the service it does to the loyal. Adherence to a cause creates character, not only tests us, but elevates us. Our humanity is glorified by its loyalties—friendship, the business man loyal to contract, the professional man loyal to the ethics of his profession, the scholar loyal to truth.

III

If we ask further why we need loyalty and what it can do for us, we see that without it we are each a confused mass of desires and appetites and ambitions, unrelated and casual. We need something to unify life, and give it direction. We amount to very little till some purpose grips, and controls, and moves us, so that we in our measure can say with St. Paul, "This one thing I do." All the more is this need clamant in our distracted modern world, where all institutions have been subjected to merciless criticism and all standards have been questioned. The strength of a dictator's rule lies largely in its giving a centre to loyalty, claiming complete devotion and allegiance. In the huge complexity of modern life, so many men feel distracted and purposeless, with nothing to command and direct the whole man. No wonder that the tremendous loyalty which the absolute State demands should captivate the masses.

For, loyalty does more than unify life. It enlarges and ennobles life; for the cause is at least always bigger than ourselves. This is

true even of the smaller groups which claim our loyalty, such as the family, and more obvious still with larger interests, such as the Church and its cause, or the nation. Further, it unites us with others in a common cause, and thus satisfies the social needs of our nature. The man loyal to his group feels that he has chosen them and they have chosen him, and finds something of the satisfaction that is one of the joys of friendship. One of the deep needs of human nature is gratified. We cannot be loyal to people in general, to a miscellaneous crowd. There has to be a common bond somewhere, a point of contact. All this explains why millions of men have been swept in a fine fervour by the insistent all-embracing ideal presented by the absolute State. If democracy cannot offer as great an appeal, it is because we are too stupid or too supine to make it.

But loyalty is more than passive and placid enjoyment of a human instinct: it calls for service, for active support. This is specially true of the larger loyalties, such as that of the Church or some policy affecting the people or the nation. It expects something of the mis-

sionary zeal, which goes out to make converts. It turns adherents into propagandists. There is a lot of nonsense talked of the mysterious dangers of some occult force called propaganda. When men speak like that they mean by propaganda the dissemination of opinions other than their own, of which they are afraid and with which they disagree. They never call their own opinions and the views they so freely express by an opprobrious word like propaganda. They call it the wise and useful education of the public mind.

Whatever we call it, we are certainly bombarded by it on all hands. We would need to be blind and deaf to escape it. Everywhere we meet the concerted attempt to influence our opinion and mould our minds. Through advertisements, speech, newspapers, books, broadcasting, moving pictures, on every hand and by every avenue it reaches us. But this is only in a democracy. In a dictatorship there is only one propaganda. In Germany, Dr. Goebbels is perhaps the most influential man next to Hitler, because his title is the Minister of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment, but nobody else is allowed to shed a ray of light

on the public. As a fact democracy functions through ceaseless propaganda, because it gives a free field for practically any and all sorts of propaganda. We should welcome it, if it is free. The only completely vicious propaganda is the secret kind which works in hidden and stealthy ways to undermine freedom, or the sort which refuses to allow any counter-propaganda and monopolises the field. Whenever a man becomes captive to a great loyalty, he cannot avoid being a propagandist. He seeks opportunities to serve his cause. In democracy, which in essence is government by discussion, where freedom and tolerance have a secure place, the widest possible scope for propaganda should be gladly given. By it the loyal man serves his loyalty.

IV

So far we have spoken of loyalty almost abstractly, and have made little distinction amid the varied and manifold causes that ask for loyalty. This of set purpose; for loyalty to any cause is better than none, as far as the effect on character is concerned. But the hardest trial in life is when there seems a con-

flict of loyalties, when they seem to clash, and a decision has to be made. Sometimes this is only a part of the problem of a growing mind or a developing nature. Such typical cases are a student's loyalty to his home-Church when he goes back and finds his mind has broadened; or a workman's loyalty to his labour union when he thinks its policy is narrow; or a citizen's loyalty to his political party if he questions its platform. Many such questions can be settled by enlarging the thought of the group we should be loyal to, the greater good of the larger number, the good of the whole community, or of the nation.

At the same time the causes that ask for loyalty are not to be judged by size alone, by sheer bulk, but by quality. There are cases where loyalty to family may be more valuable than to a much larger association or group. Loyalty to country may have a far bigger claim than to an international cause. Loyalty to conscience may be paramount in an issue, above family, or State, or any other natural relationship. The scale of judgment is according to quality not mere quantity. The larger claim is not necessarily the one that bulks

biggest in numbers. It looks as if this discussion about judging loyalties is useful only where freedom exists. Autocrats speak as if there was one exclusive loyalty which overrides all others, but loyal hearts do not find it so. Loyalty is no exclusive thing. It moves in a widening circle to home, neighbourhood, township, nation, world.

A larger loyalty does not abrogate lesser ones. The fact that we widen our interests and our attachments does not weaken the earlier and narrower bonds. A man does not despise the family when he accepts civic duty. He does not forget and despise the city when he begins to think of the nation. There may be an even finer patriotism through having the international mind. The smaller loyalties do not wither because we give ourselves to other and larger ones. Fears are often expressed for the family in the huge industrial organisation of modern life, and even sometimes there are prophecies of its disintegration.

But the family in some shape has been, and must ever be, the social unit. It has changed, and will again change, its character, as every living thing changes or dies. It might rather

be argued that the family will only grow more important, as we understand better its place and function in the social whole. As an institution it needs to be adjusted to modern conditions, like all institutions that survive. But as home-making is seen to be vital to social welfare, there will be more care about marriage, for example, and adequate provision for the possibility of real homes. A change or weakening of a necessary institution is only a call to replace it with a better, or to strengthen it. If there is a change in family tradition, if the old-fashioned patriarchal family cannot exist in our modern industrial society, it means that we must build a new and fitter type—if only because we dare not lose the opportunities for loyalty the family affords.

This is true also of patriotism, which some have feared would be weakened by some wider ideal of an international order. This fear sounds rather foolish today, which has witnessed such a sensational recrudescence of national feeling. It is true that not long ago there was a rather active cosmopolitanism, which seemed to be working for the decay of patriotic feeling. The justification for this was

that many saw and feared the evils of over-exalted national sentiment, breeding arrogance, and narrowness, and war. There will come again, and it cannot come too soon, another protest against the extravagant nationalism which curses our world today, but there is no danger of patriotism being unduly weakened or permanently destroyed. It is too deeply rooted in human nature, and it is too useful as a tremendous sphere for our loyalties.

V

It has to be repeated that when and if we take in a wider group it does not mean that we give up and depart from loyalty to the smaller. All true growth consists in increasing our interests in ever-widening circles, from self to family, village, clan, nation. Indeed we never truly appreciate the binding quality of a smaller relationship until we relate it to a larger. It gets set in the larger life, and acquires new value and enhanced interest. The lover of the old English ballad said truly,

> I could not love thee, dear, so much,
> Loved I not honour more.

It is psychologically true that a larger love only hallows personal affections and increases their worth. It gives them a sanction and a permanence they otherwise would be without. This explains the startling assertion of Jesus, "Whoso loveth father or mother or wife or children more than me is not worthy of me."

Not only is loyalty not an exclusive thing, but separate loyalties do not necessarily mean divided loyalties. The attempt of some dictatorships to crush out all the natural loyalties of men in the interest of one absorbing claim is a crime against the human soul. It is almost a form of disease, an abnormal war neurosis, which is false to the facts of life. Separate loyalties if they are natural do not imply that they divide and weaken another natural allegiance. The real unity of a nation is strengthened and enriched by diversity. The loyalty of Scotsmen to Scotland, of Canadians to Canada, of Australians to Australia does not weaken their loyalty to the British Empire. It enriches the real unity of the Empire. Jewish loyalty to their race and religion will not make them less loyal citizens of the nation of which they

are citizens. This is the basis of the condemnation which the outside world pronounces on the Nazi persecution of the Jew as such. No one would question the German right to punish Jews who were criminal, or disloyal, but the wholesale persecution of Jews as Jews is a policy against which the conscience of the civilised world protests. British and American Jews are as loyal to their several countries as any other section of the community. We feel that Hitler's anti-Semitic campaign is an outrage to the Christian conscience and an outrage to common sense.

Democracy is enriched by the varied loyalties it encourages, and they do not detract from loyalty to the system which gives scope for their exercise. Loyalty to home will add passion to the loyalty to the land, which guards the home and makes it possible. Loyalty to Church will deepen loyalty to the nation, which guarantees the religious liberty that protects the Church. Group loyalty will only strengthen loyalty to the supreme law, which safeguards the group. The servile State is stupid when it thinks that men must offer it a finer loyalty because it has crushed all other attachments and left it in

lonely and barren majesty. Unless we are wrong in our religious estimate of human nature, the servile State is doomed to be less worth living for and dying for.

The ground for this ultimate conviction is a religious faith. Indeed the supreme demand for loyalty lies in the broadly religious sphere. That is why the greatest soul this earth has known summed up the highest ideal in the Kingdom of God, demanding complete devotion to a cause that means universal human good. If our loyalty ever gets as big as that with us, it becomes the master-light of all our seeing, and it leaves all our lesser loyalties made more secure because more sacred.

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